

## Arabia: The Cradle of Islam



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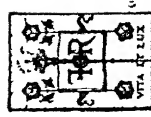
Studies in the Geography, People and  
Politics of the Peninsula with an  
account of Islam and Mission-work



REV. S. M. ZWEMER, F.R.G.S.

INTRODUCTION BY

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DEDICATED

TO

*The "Student Volunteers" of America*

IN MEMORY OF

THE TWO AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS WHO LAID DOWN THEIR  
LIVES FOR ARADIA

PETER J. ZWEMER

AND

GEORGE E. STONE

And Jesus said unto him : This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—LUKE XIX. 9, 10.

## Introductory Note

THE author of this instructive volume is in the direct line of missionary pioneers to the Moslem world. He follows Raymond Lull, Henry Martyn, Ion Keith-Falconer, and Bishop French, and, with his friend and comrade the Rev. James Cantine, now stands in the shining line of succession at the close of a decade of patient and brave service at that lonely outpost on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Others have followed in their footsteps, until the Arabian Mission, the adopted child of the Reformed Church in America, is at present a compact and resolute group of men and women at the gates of Arabia, waiting on God's will, and intent first of all upon fulfilling in the spirit of obedience to the Master the duty assigned them.

These ten years of quiet, unflinching service have been full of prayer, observation, study, and wistful survey of the great task, while at the same time every opportunity has been improved to gain a foothold, to plant a standard, to overcome a prejudice, to sow a seed, and to win a soul. The fruits of this intelligent and conscientious effort to grasp the situation and plan the campaign are given to us in this valuable study of "Arabia, the Cradle of Islam." It is a missionary contribution to our knowledge of the world. The author is entirely familiar with the literature of his subject. English, German, French, and Dutch authorities are at his command. The less accessible Arabic authors are easily within his reach, and he brings from those mysterious gardens of spices into his clear, straightforward narrative, the local coloring and fragrance, as well as the indisputable witness of original medieval sources. The ethnological, geographical, archeological, commercial, and

political information of the descriptive chapters brings to our hands a valuable and readable summary of facts, in a form which is highly useful, and will be sure to quicken an intelligent interest in one of the great religious and international problems of our times.

His study of Islam is from the missionary standpoint, but this does not necessarily mean that it is unfair, or unhistorical, or lacking in scholarly acumen. Purely scientific and academic study of an ethnic religion is one method of approaching it. It can thus be classified, labelled, and put upon the shelf in the historical museum of the world's religions, and the result has a value which none will dispute. This, however, is not the only, or indeed the most serviceable, way of examining, estimating and passing a final judgment upon a religious system. Such study must be comparative, it must have some standard of value; it must not discard acknowledged tests of excellence; it must make use of certain measurements of capacity and power; it must be pursued in the light of practical ethics, and be in harmony with the great fundamental laws of religious experience and spiritual progress which have controlled thus far the regenerative processes of human development.

The missionary in forming his final judgment inevitably compares the religion he studies with the religion he teaches. He need not do this in any unkind, or bitter, or abusive spirit. On the contrary, he may do it with a supreme desire to uncover delusion, and make clear the truth as it has been given to him by the Great Teacher. He may make a generous and sympathetic allowance for the influence of local environment, he may trace in an historic spirit the natural evolution of a religious system, he may give all due credit to every worthy element and every pleasing characteristic therein, he may regard its symbols with respect, and also with all charity and consideration the leaders and guides whom the people reverence; yet his own judgment may still be inflexible, his own allegiance unflinching, and he may feel it to be his duty to put into plain,

direct, and vigorous prose his irreversible verdict that Christianity being true, Islam is not, Buddhism is not, Hinduism is not.

There he stands ; he is not afraid of the issue. His Master is the one supreme and infallible judge, who can pronounce an unerring verdict concerning the truth of any religion. He has ventured to bear witness to the truth which his Master has taught him. Let no one lightly question the value of the contribution he makes to the comparative study of religion.

The spirit in which our author has written of Islam is marked by fauness, sobriety, and discrimination, and yet there is no mistaking the verdict of one who speaks with an authority which is based upon exceptional opportunities of observation, close study of literary sources and moral results, and undoubted honesty of purpose.

It may not be out of place to note the hearty, outspoken satisfaction with which the author regards the extension of British authority over the long sweep of the Arabian coast line. His admiration and delight can only be fully understood by one who has been a resident in the East, and has felt the blight of Moslem rule, and its utter hopelessness as an instrument of progress.

Let this book have its hour of quiet opportunity, and it will broaden our vision, enlarge our knowledge, and deepen our interest in themes which will never lose their hold upon the attention of thoughtful men.

JAMES S. DENNIS.



## Preface

THERE are indications that Arabia will not always remain in its long patriarchal sleep and that there is a future in store for the Arab. Politics, civilization and missions have all begun to touch the hem of the peninsula and it seems that soon there will be one more land—or at least portions of it—to add to “the white man’s burden.” History is making in the Persian Gulf, and Yemen will not forever remain, a tempting prize, —untouched. The spiritual burden of Arabia is the Mohammedan religion and it is in its cradle we can best see the fruits of Islam. We have sought to trace the spiritual as well as the physical geography of Arabia by showing how Islam grew out of the earlier Judaism, Sabeanism and Christianity.

The purpose of this book is especially to call attention to Arabia and the need of missionary work for the Arabs. There is no dearth of literature on Arabia, the Arabs and Islam, but most of the books on Arabia are antiquated or inaccessible to the ordinary reader; some of the best are out of print. The only modern work in English, which gives a general idea of the whole peninsula is Bayard Taylor’s somewhat juvenile “*Travels in Arabia.*” In German there is the scholarly compilation of Albrecht Zehm, “*Arabie und die Araber, seit hundert jahren,*” which is generally accurate, but is rather dull reading and has neither illustrations nor maps. From the missionary standpoint there are no books on Arabia save the biographies of Keith-Falconer, Bishop French and Kamil Abdul-Messiah.

This fact together with the friends of the author urged their united plea for a book on this “Neglected Peninsula,” its people, religion and missions. We have written from a missionary

viewpoint, so that the book has certain features which are intended specially for those who are interested in the missionary enterprise. But that enterprise has now so large a place in modern thought that no student of secular history can afford to remain in ignorance of its movements.

Some of the chapters are necessarily based largely on the books by other travellers, but if any object to quotation marks, we would remind them that Emerson's writings are said to contain three thousand three hundred and ninety three quotations from eight hundred and sixty-eight individuals! The material for the book was collected during nine years of residence in Arabia. It was for the most part put into its present form at Bahrein during the summer of 1899, in the midst of many outside duties and distractions.

I wish especially to acknowledge my indebtedness to W. A. Buchanan, Esq., of London, who gave the initiative for the preparation of this volume and to my friend Mr. D. L. Pierson who has generously undertaken the entire oversight of its publication.

The system for the spelling of Arabic names in the text follows in general that of the Royal Geographical Society. This system consists, in brief, in three rules: (1) words made familiar by long usage remain unchanged; (2) vowels are pronounced as in Italian and consonants as in English; (3) no redundant letters are written and all those written are pronounced.

We send these chapters on their errand, and hope that especially the later ones may reach the hearts of the Student Volunteers for foreign missions to whom they are dedicated; we pray also that the number of those who love the Arabs and labor for their enlightenment and redemption may increase.

S. M. ZWEMER.

*Bahrein, Arabia.*



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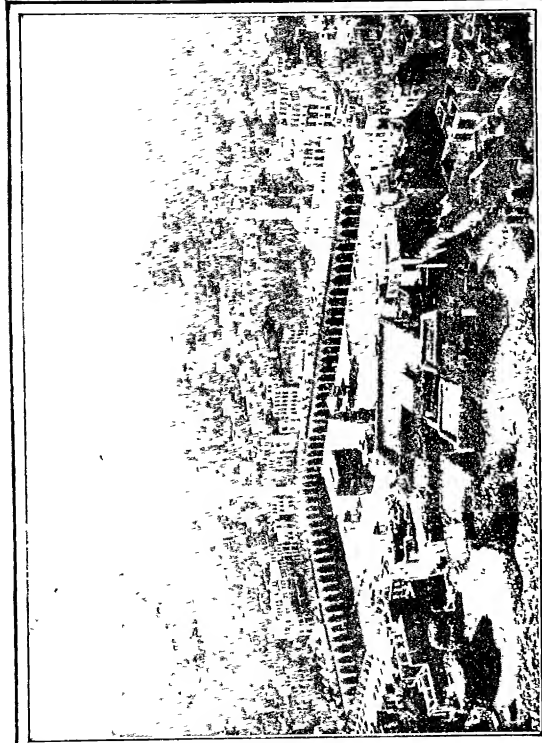
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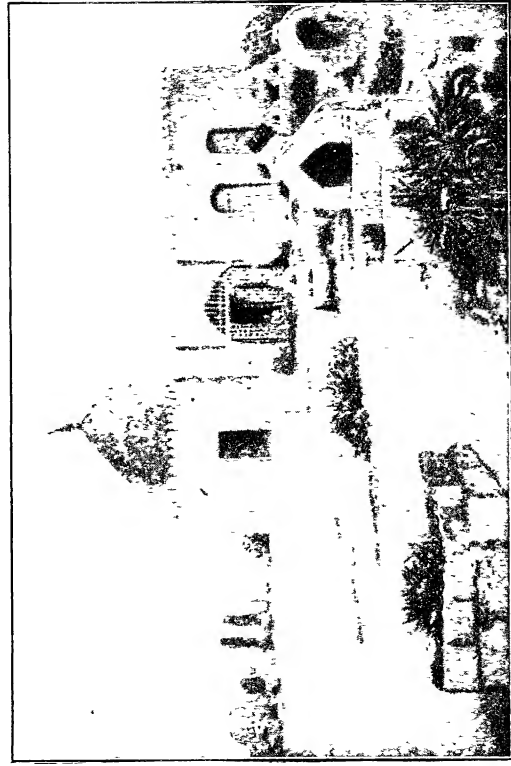
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VIEW OF MECCA AND THE SACRED MOSQUE



THE REPUTED TOMB OF EVE AT JIDDAH

## I

### THE NEGLECTED PENINSULA

“Intersected by sandy deserts and vast ranges of mountains it presents on one side nothing but desolation in its most frightful form, while the other is adorned with all the beauties of the most fertile regions. Such is its position that it enjoys at once all the advantages of hot and of temperate climates. The peculiar productions of regions the most distant from one another are produced here in equal perfection. What Greek and Latin authors mention concerning Arabia proves by its obscurity their ignorance of almost everything respecting the Arabs. Prejudices relative to the inconveniences and dangers of travelling in Arabia have hitherto kept the moderns in equal ignorance.”—*M. Niebuhr* (1792).

WHAT Jerusalem and Palestine are to Christendom this, and vastly more, Mecca and Arabia are to the Mohammedan world. Not only is this land the cradle of their religion and the birthplace of their prophet, the shrine toward which, for centuries, prayers and pilgrimage have gravitated; but Arabia is also, according to universal Moslem tradition, the original home of Adam after the fall and the home of all the older patriarchs. The story runs that when the primal pair fell from their estate of bliss in the heavenly paradise, Adam landed on a mountain in Ceylon and Eve fell at Jiddah, on the western coast of Arabia. After a hundred years of wandering they met near Mecca, and here Allah constructed for them a tabernacle, on the site of the present Kaaba. He put in its foundation the famous stone once whiter than snow, but since turned black by the sins of pilgrims<sup>1</sup> In proof of these statements travellers are shown the Black stone at Mecca and the tomb of Eve near Jiddah. Another accepted tradition says that Mecca stands on a spot exactly beneath God's throne in heaven.

Without reference to these wild traditions, which are soberly

set down as facts by Moslem historians, Arabia is a land of perpetual interest to the geographer, and the historian.

Since Niebuhr's day many intrepid travellers have surveyed the coasts and penetrated into the interior, but his charge that we are ignorant of the real character of the vast peninsula is still true as far as it relates to the southern and southeastern districts. No traveller has yet crossed the northern boundary of Hadramaut and explored the Dahna desert, also called the Roba-el-Khali, or "empty abode." The vast territory between the peninsula of Katar and the mountains of Oman is also practically a blank on the best maps. Indeed the only noteworthy map of that portion of the peninsula is that of Ptolemy reproduced by Sprenger in his "*Alte Geographie Arabiens.*"

Arabia has well-defined boundaries everywhere except on the north. Eastward are the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Ormuz and the Gulf of Oman. The entire southern coast is washed by the Indian Ocean which reaches to Bab-el-Mandeb "The Gate-of-tears," from which point the Red Sea and the Gulf of Akaba form the western boundary. The undefined northern desert, in some places a sea of sand, completes the isolation which has led the Arabs themselves to call the peninsula their "Island" (*Jezirat-el-Arab*). In fact the northern boundary will probably never be defined accurately. The so-called "Syrian desert," reaching to about the thirty-fifth parallel might better be regarded as the Arabian desert, for in physical and ethnical features it bears much greater resemblance to the southern peninsula than to the surrounding regions of Syria and Mesopotamia. Bagdad is properly an Arabian city and to the Arabs of the north is as much a part of the peninsula as is Aden to those of the southwest. The true, though shifting, northern boundary of Arabia would be the limit of Nomad encampments, but for convenience and practical purposes a boundary line may be drawn from the Mediterranean along the thirty-third parallel to Busrah.

Thus the shores of Arabia stretch from Suez to the Euphrates

delta for a total length of nearly 4,000 miles. This coast-line has comparatively few islands or inlets, except in the Persian Gulf. The Red Sea coast is fringed by extensive coral reefs, dangerous to navigation, but from Aden to Muscat the coast is elevated and rocky, and contains several good harbors. Eastern Arabia has a low, flat coast-line made of coral-rock with here and there volcanic headlands. Farsan, off the Tehamah coast, famous as the centre for Arab slave-dhows, Perim, where English batteries command the gate of the Red Sea; the Kuria-Muria group in the Indian Ocean; and the Bahrein archipelago in the Persian Gulf, are the only important islands. Socotra, although occupied by an Arab population and historically Arabian, is by geographers generally attached to Africa. This island is however under the Indian government, and, once Christian, is now wholly Mohammedan.

The greatest length of the peninsula is about 1,000 miles, its average breadth 600, and its area somewhat over 1,000,000 square miles. It is thus over four times the size of France or larger than the United States east of the Mississippi River.

Arabia, until quite recently, has generally been regarded as a vast expanse of sandy desert. Recent explorations have proved this idea quite incorrect, and a large part of the region still considered desert is as yet unexplored. Palgrave, in his "Central Arabia" gives an excellent summary of the physical characteristics of the whole peninsula as he saw it. Since his time Hadramaut has been partially explored and the result confirms his statements. "The general type of Arabia is that of a central table-land surrounded by a desert ring sandy to the south, west and east, stony to the north. This outlying circle is in its turn girt by a line of mountains low and sterile for the most, but attaining in Yemen and Oman considerable height, breadth and fertility; while beyond these a narrow rim of coast is bordered by the sea. The surface of the midmost table-land equals somewhat less than one-half of the entire peninsula; and its special demarkations are much affected,

may often absolutely fixed, by the windings and inrunnings of the Nefud (sandy desert). If to these central highlands or *Nejd*, taking that word in its wider sense, we add whatever spots of fertility belong to the outer circles, we shall find that Arabia contains about two-thirds of cultivated or at least of cultivatable land, with a remaining third of irreclaimable desert, chiefly on the south."

From this description it is evident that the least attractive part of the country is the coast. This may be the reason that Arabia has been so harshly judged, as to climate and soil and so much neglected by those who only knew of it from the captains who had touched its coast in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Nothing is more surprising, than to pass through the barren cinder gateway of Aden up the mountain passes into the marvellous fertility and delightful climate of Yemen. Arabia like the Arab, has a rough, frowning exterior but a warm, hospitable heart.

From the table-land of *Nejd*, which has an average elevation of about 3,000 feet above the sea, there is a gradual ascent southward to the highlands of Yemen and Oman where there are mountain peaks as high as 8,000 and 10,000 feet. This diversity of surface causes an equal diversity of climate. The prevailing conditions are intense heat and dryness, and the world-zone of maximum heat in July embraces nearly the entire peninsula. On the coast the heat is more trying because of the moisture from the enormous evaporation of the landlocked basins. During part of the summer there is scarcely any difference in the register of the wet-and dry-bulb thermometer. In the months of June, July and August, 1897, the averages of maximum temperature at Busrah were 100°, 103½° and 102° F.; and the minimum 84°, 86½° and 84° F. *Nejd* has a salubrious climate, while in Yemen and Oman on the highlands the mercury even in July seldom rises above 85°. In July, 1892, I passed in one day's journey from a shade temperature of 110° F. on the coast at Hodeidah to one of 55° at



Menakha on the mountains. At Sanaa there is frost for three months in the year, and Jebel Tobeyk in northwest Arabia is covered with snow all winter. In fact, all northern Arabia has a winter season with cold rains and occasional frosts

The geology of the peninsula is of true Arabian simplicity. According to Doughty it consists of a foundation stock of plutonic (igneous) rock whereon lie sandstone, and above that limestone. Going from Moab to Sinai we cross the strata in the reverse order, while in the depression of the gulf of Akaba the three strata are in regular order although again overtopped by the granite of the mountains. Fossils are very rare, but coral formation is common all along the coast. Volcanic formations and lava (called by the Arabs, harrat) crop out frequently, as in the region of Medina and Khaibar. In going by direct route from the Red Sea (Jiddah) to Busrah, we meet first granite and trap-rock, overtopped in the Harrat el-Kisshub by lavas, and further on at Wady Gerir and Jebel Shear by basalts; at the Nefud el Kasim (Boreyda) sandstones begin until we reach the limestone region of Jebel Toweyk. Thence all is gravel and sand to the Euphrates.

Arabia has no rivers and none of its mountain streams (some of which are perennial) reach the seacoast. At least they do not arrive there by the *overland* route, for it is a well-established fact that the many fresh water springs found in the Bahrein archipelago have their origin in the uplands of Arabia. At Muscat, too, water is always flowing toward the sea in abundance at the depth of ten to thirty feet below the wady-bed, this supplies excellent well-water. In fact the entire region of Hasa is full of underground water-courses and perennial springs. Coast-streams are frequent in Yemen during the rain-season and often become suddenly full to overflowing dashing everything before them. They are called *sayl*, and well illustrate Christ's parable of the flood which demolished the house built upon the sand.

The great wadys of Arabia are its characteristic feature,

celebrated since the days of Job, the Arab. These wadys, often full to the brim in winter and black by reason of frost but entirely dried up during the heat of summer, would never be suspected of giving nourishment to even a blade of grass. They are generally dry for nine and ten months in the year, during which time water is obtained from wells sunk in the wady-bed. Wady Sirhan runs in a southeasterly direction from the Hauran highlands to the Jauf district on the edge of the great Nefud; it is fed by the smaller Wady er-Rajel. Wady Dauasir which receives the Nejran streams drains all of the Asir and southern Hejaz highlands northward to Bahr Salumeh, a small lake, the only one known in the whole peninsula. The Aftan is another important wady running from the borders of Nejd into the Persian Gulf. This wady-bed is marked on some maps as a river, flowing into the Persian Gulf apparently by two mouths. It does not exist to-day. The most important water-bed in Arabia is the celebrated Wady er-Ruma, only partly explored, which flows from Hejaz across the peninsula for nearly 800 miles in a northwesterly direction toward the Euphrates. Were there a more abundant rainfall this wady would reach the Shat-el-Arab and give unity to the now disjointed water-system of Mesopotamia and north Arabia.<sup>1</sup> For obvious reasons the caravan routes of Arabia generally follow the course of the wadys.

Arabia is also a land of mountains and highlands. The

<sup>1</sup> May not this wady have been once a noble stream perhaps, as Glaser conjectures, the fourth of the Paradise rivers? (Gen 11. 10-14.) Upon the question as to where the ancient Semites located Paradise Glaser says that it was in the neighborhood of the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, on the Arabian side. There the sacred palm of the city of Eridu grew; there according to the view of the ancient Arabs the two larger wadys of Central Arabia opened. The one is the Wady er-Ruma or the Gaihan; and the other is the Wady ed-Dauasir, a *side wady* of which in the neighborhood of Hamdanı still bears the name of Faishan (Pishon).—See "Recent Research in Bible Lands," by H. V. Hilprecht, (Philadelphia, 1897). See also *The Sunday-School Times*, Vol XXXIII, No 49.

most clearly developed system is the extensive range skirting the Red Sea at a distance of from one to three days' journey from the coast. South of Mecca there are peaks of over 8,000 feet; and beyond, the range broadens out to form the Yemen highlands, a corner of the peninsula worthy of its old name "Arabia Felix." The mountains along the south coast are more irregular and disconnected until they broaden out a second time between Ras el Had and Ras Mussendum to form the highlands of Oman. Along the gulf coast there are no mountains except an occasional volcanic hill like Jebel Dokhan in Bahrein and Jebel Sanam near Zobeir.

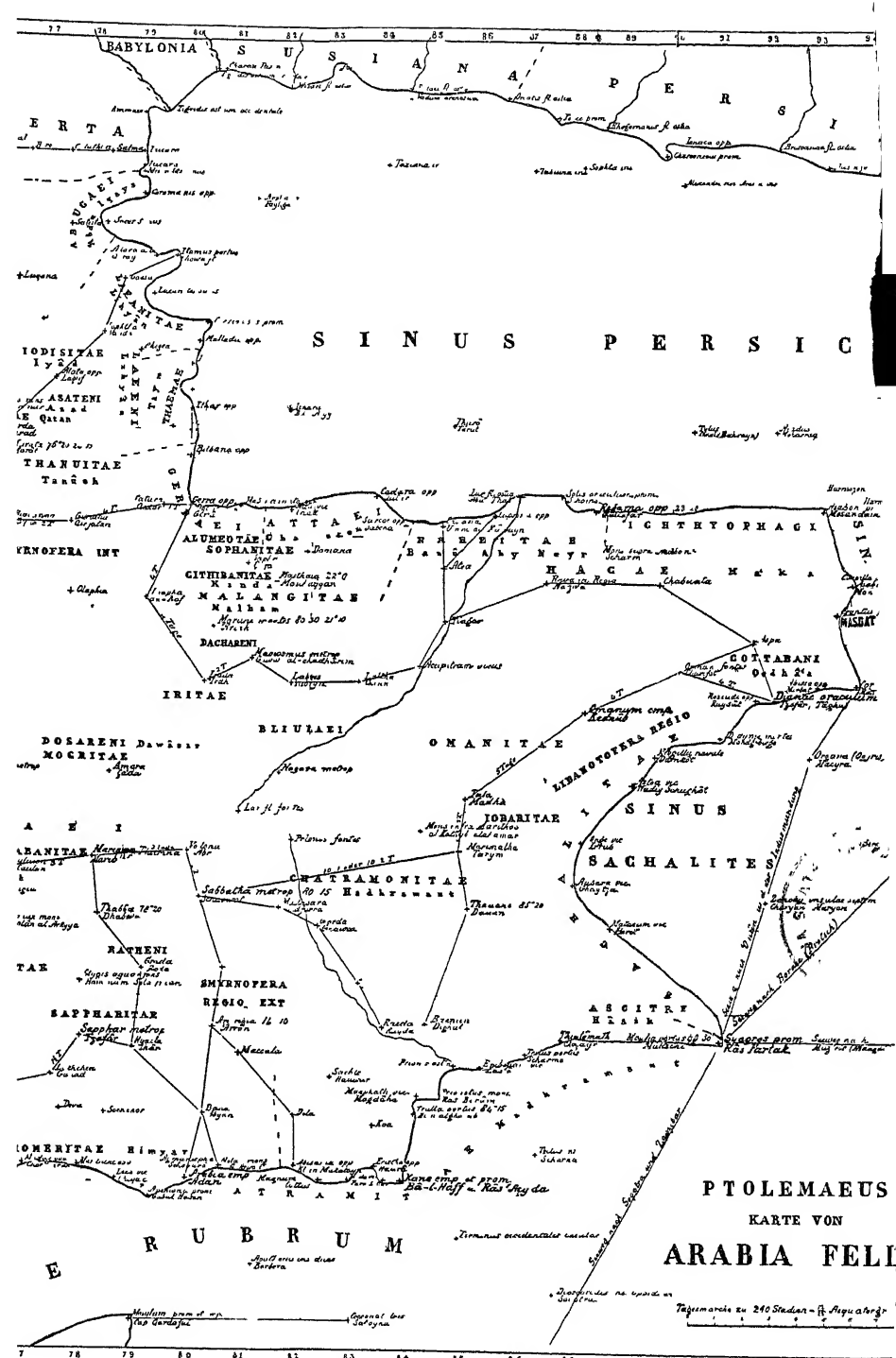
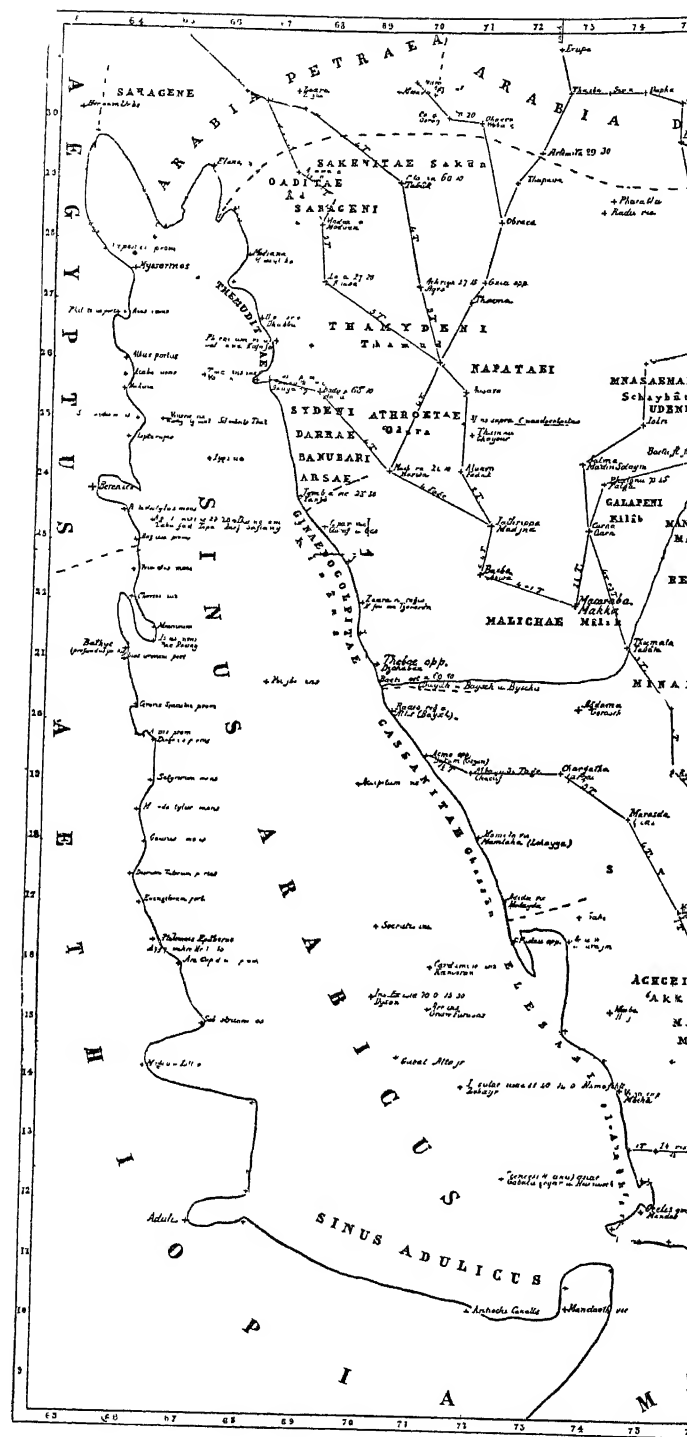
The Nejd is crossed by several ridges of which the best known is Jebel Shammar running nearly east and west at an altitude of about 6,000 feet. Jebel Menakib, Jebel Aared, Jebel Toweyk and Jebel Athal are other ranges south of Jebel Shammar and also running in a similar direction toward the southwest and northeast. The Sinai peninsula is a rocky limestone plateau intersected by rugged gorges and highest toward the south in the region of Sinai proper.

Next to its wadys and mountains Arabia is characterized chiefly by the so-called *Harra*t or volcanic tracks already mentioned. These black, gloomy, barren regions occupy a much wider extent of north Arabia than is generally supposed. The largest is *Harra*t *Khaibar*, north of Medina, the old centre of the Jews in the days of Mohammed. It is over 100 miles in length and in some parts thirty miles wide. A wilderness of lava and lava-stones with many extinct crater heads, craggy, and strewn with rough blocks of basalt and other igneous rocks. In some places the lava beds are 600 feet deep. Signs of volcanic action are still seen at Khaibar, smoke issuing from crevices and steam from the summit of Jebel Ethnan. A volcanic eruption was seen at Medina as late as 1256 A. D.<sup>1</sup> and the hot and sulphur springs of Hasa and Hadramaut seem to indicate present volcanic action.

<sup>1</sup> Samhudi's History of Medina. (Arabic text p 40, sqq.)

The sandy-tracts of the so-called Arabian deserts are termed by the Arabs themselves *nefud* (drained, exhausted, spent), the name given on most maps. The general physical features of this "desert" are those of a plain clothed with stunted, aromatic shrubs of many varieties, but their value as pasture is very unequal, some being excellent for camels and sheep, others absolutely worthless. Some nefuds abound in grasses and flowering plants after the early rains, and then the desert "blossoms like the rose." Others are without rain and barren all year, they are covered with long stretches of drift-sand, carried about by the wind and tossed in billows on the weather side of the rocks and bushes.<sup>1</sup> Palgrave asserts that some of the nefud sands are 600 feet deep. They prevail in the vast unexplored region south of Nejd and north of Hadramaut including the so-called "Great Arabian Desert." Absolute sterility is the dominant feature here, whereas the northern nefuds are the pasture lands for thousands of horses and sheep.

<sup>1</sup> These wastes are also termed *Dakhna*, *Ahkaf*, and *Hamad* according to the greater or less depth or shifting nature of the sands or the more or less compact character of the soil.



PTOLEMAEUS  
KARTE VON  
ARABIA FELIX

## II

### THE GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS OF ARABIA

THE division of Arabia into provinces has always been rather according to physical geography than political boundaries. The earliest division of the peninsula, and in some respects the most correct, was that of the Greek and Roman writers into *Arabia Deserta* and *Arabia Felix*. The latter epithet was perhaps only a mistaken translation of *El-Yemen*—the land on “the right hand,” that is south of Mecca, for the Orientals face east. This is contrasted with Syria which in Arabic is called “*Es-Sham*” or the land “to the left” of Mecca. The third division, *Arabia Petraea*, or “Stony Arabia,” first appears in Ptolemy and is applied to the Sinai district. He limits *Arabia Deserta* to the extreme northern desert and so his map of the entire peninsula bears the title of *Arabia Felix*. The great geographer anticipated all modern maps of Arabia by naming the regions according to the tribes that inhabit them, a much more intelligent method than the drawing of artificial lines around natural features and dubbing them with a name to suit the cartographer.

The Arab geographers know nothing of this threefold division into sandy, stony, and happy-land. They divide the Island-of-the-Arabs (*Jezirat-el-Arab*) into five provinces.<sup>1</sup> The first is called *El-Yemen* and includes Hadramaut, Mehrah, Oman, Shehr, and Nejran. The second *El-Hejaz*, on the west coast, so called because it is the barrier between Tehama and Nejd, it nearly corresponds to our Hejaz, excluding its

<sup>1</sup>“*Kitab Sinajet-el-Tarb*” by Nofel Effendi (Beirut 1890). The author follows the older Arabic authorities.

southern portion. The third is *Tehama*, along the coast, between Yemen and Hejaz. The fourth is *Nejd*, a term loosely applied to all the interior table-lands. The fifth is called *Yemama* or '*Arudh*' because it extends all the "wide" way between Yemen (Oman) and Nejd. It is important to distinguish between this Arabian division and that now nearly everywhere adopted on the maps of the occident; much confusion has arisen when this distinction was not made.

The modern division of the peninsula into seven provinces: Hejaz, Yemen, Hadramaut, Oman, Hasa, Irak and Nejd, is according to political geography and serves all practical purposes, although it is not strictly accurate. Hejaz, the Holyland of Arabia, includes the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina. Yemen is bounded by the line of fertility on the north and east so as to include the important region of Asir. Hadramaut has no clearly defined boundaries and stretches northward to the unknown region of the Dahna. Oman is the peninsula between the southern shore of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, while Hasa covers the entire coast district north of El-Katar peninsula (on some maps called El-Bahrein). Irak-Arabi or Irak is the northern river-country politically corresponding to what is called "Turkish-Arabia."

As to the present division of political power in Arabia, it is sufficient here to note that the Sinai peninsula and 200 miles of coast south of the Gulf of Akaba is Egyptian; Hejaz, Yemen and Hasa are nominally Turkish provinces, but their political boundaries are shifting and uncertain. The present Shereef of Mecca at times dictates to the Sublime Porte while the Bedouin tribes even in Hejaz acknowledge neither Sultan nor Shereef and waylay the pilgrim caravans that come to the holy cities unless they receive large blackmail. In Yemen the Arabs have never ceased to fret under the galling yoke of the Turk since it was put on their shoulders by the capture of Sana in 1873. The insurrection in 1892 was nearly a revolution and again this year (1899) all Yemen is in arms. It is

very suggestive that in the present revolt some of the Arabs made use of the English flag to secure sympathy.

In Hasa, the real sovereignty of Turkey only exists in three or four towns while all the Bedouin and many of the villagers yield to the Dowla, neither tribute, obedience nor love. Irak alone is actually Turkish and yields large revenue. But even here Arab-uprisings are frequent. Nominally, however, Turkey holds the fairest province on the south, the religious centres on the west and the fertile northeast of Arabia,—one-fifth of the total area of the peninsula.

The remainder of Arabia is independent of Turkey. Petty rulers calling themselves Sultans, Ameers or Imams have for centuries divided the land between them. The Sultanate of Oman and the great Nejd-kingdom are the only important governments, but the former lost its glory when its seat of power and influence was transferred to Zanzibar. Nejd in its widest sense is governed to-day by Abd-el-Aziz bin Mitaab the nephew of the late Mohammed bin Rashid, King Richard of Arabia, who gained his throne by the massacre of seventeen possible pretenders. The territory of this potentate is bordered southward by Riad and the Wahabi country. Northward his influence extends beyond the Nefud, right away to the Oases of Kaf and Ittery in the Wady Sirhan ( $38^{\circ}$  E. Long.,  $31^{\circ}$  N. Lat.) east of the Dead Sea. The inhabitants of these oases acknowledge Abd-el-Aziz as their suzerain paying him a yearly tribute of four pounds (\$20 00) for each village. The people of the intervening district of Jauf also acknowledge his rule which reaches westward to Teima. He also commands the new pilgrim-route from the northeast which formerly passed through Riad but now touches Hail, the capital of Nejd. The Wahabi movement has collapsed and their political power is broken, although their influence has extended to the furthest confines of Arabia.

The only foreign power dominant in Arabia, beside Turkey, is England. Aden became a British possession in 1838 and



since then British influence has extended until it now embraces a district 200 miles long by forty broad and a population of 130,000. The Island of Perim in the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, the Kuria-Muria Islands on the south coast, and Socotra are also English. All the independent tribes on the coast from Aden to Muscat and from Muscat to Bahrein have made exclusive treaties with Great Britain, are subsidized by annual payments or presents and are "protected." Muscat and Bahrein are in a special sense protected states since England's settled policy is to have sole dominion in the Persian Gulf. She has agencies or consulates everywhere; the postal system of the Persian Gulf is British; the rupee has driven the piastre out of the market and as ninety-eight per cent. of the commerce is in English hands the Persian Gulf may yet become an English lake.

Arabia has no railroads, but regular caravan routes take their place in every direction. Turkish telegraph service exists between Mecca and Jiddah in Hejaz; between Sanaa, Hodeidah and Taiz in Yemen; and along the Tigris-Euphrates between Bagdad and Busrah connecting at Fao (at the delta) with the submarine cable to Bushire and India.

Of the fauna and flora of Arabia we will not here speak at length. The most characteristic plants are the date-palm of which over 100 varieties are catalogued by the Arab peasantry, and which yields a staple food. Coffee, aromatic and medicinal plants, gums and balsams, have for ages supplied the markets of the world. Yemen is characterized by tropical luxuriance, and in Nejd is the *ghatha* tree which grows to a height of fifteen feet, and yields the purest charcoal in the world.

Among the wild animals were formerly the lion and the panther, but they are now exceedingly rare. The wolf, wild boar, jackal, gazelle, fox, monkey, wild cow (or white antelope) ibex, horned viper, cobra, bustard, buzzard and hawk are also found. The ostrich still exists in southwest Arabia but is

not common. The chief domestic animals are the ass, mule, sheep, goats, but above all and superior to all, the camel and the horse.

The exact population of a land where there is no census, and where women and girls are never counted is of course unknown. The Ottoman government gives exaggerated estimates for its Arabian provinces, and travellers have made various guesses. Some recent authorities, omitting Irak, put the total population of Arabia as low as 5,000,000. A. H. Keane, F. R. G. S., gives the following estimate: <sup>1</sup>

<i>Turkish Arabia</i>	
	Hejaz, 3,500,000
	Yemen, 2,500,000
<i>Independent Arabia.</i>	
	Oman, 1,500,000
	Shammar, Bahrein, etc., 3,500,000
	<hr/>
	11,000,000

Albrecht Zehm in his book "Arabien seit hundert Jahren," arrives at nearly the same result:

Yemen and Asir,	2,252,000
Hadramaut,	1,550,000
Oman and Muscat,	1,350,000
Bahrein Katif, Nejd,	2,350,000
Hejaz, Anaeze, Kasim, and Jebel Shammar,	3,250,000
	<hr/>
	10,752,000

But undoubtedly both of these estimates, following Turkish authorities, are too high, especially for Hejaz and Yemen. A conservative estimate would be 8,000,000 for the entire peninsula in its widest extent. The true number of inhabitants will remain unknown until further explorations disclose the real character of southeastern Arabia, and until northern Hadramaut yields up its secrets. In this, as in other respects, the words of Livingstone are true "The end of the geographical feat is the beginning of the missionary enterprise."

<sup>1</sup> Geography of Asia (Vol II, p. 460), 1896.

### III

#### THE HOLY LAND OF ARABIA—MECCA

"The Eastern world moves slowly—*eppur si muove*. Half a generation ago steamers were first started to Jiddah. now we hear of a projected railway from that port to Mecca, the shareholders being all Moslems. And the example of Jerusalem encourages us to hope that long before the end of the century a visit to Mecca will not be more difficult than a trip to Hebron."—*Burton* (1855).

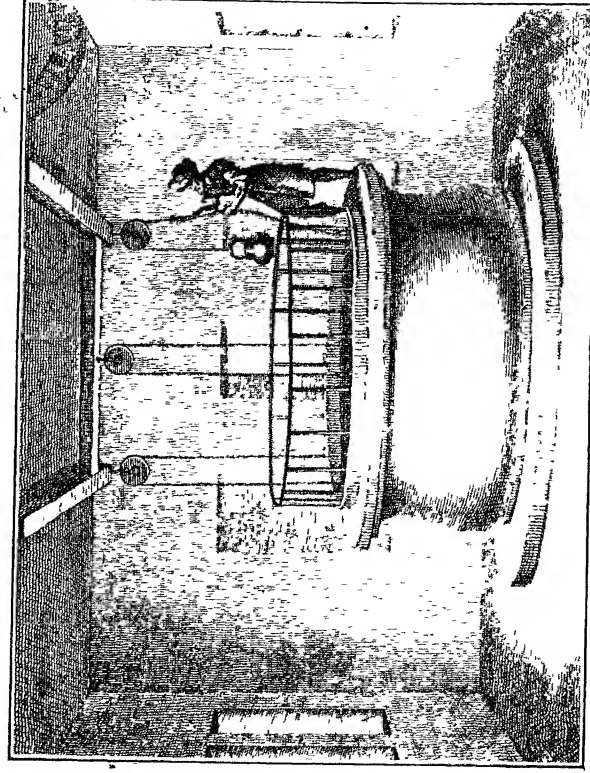
"Our train of camels drew slowly by them: but when the smooth Mecca merchant heard that the stranger riding with the camel men was a Nasrany, he cried 'Akhs! A Nasrany in these parts!' and with the horrid inurbanity of their jealous religion he added, 'Ullah curse his father!' and stared on me with a face worthy of the Koian."—*Doughty*, (1888)

IT is a rule laid down in the Koran and confirmed by many traditions that the sacred territory enclosing the birth-place and the tomb of the prophet shall not be polluted by the visits of infidels. "O believers! only those are unclean who join other gods with God! Let them not therefore after this their year come near the Sacred Mosque." (Surah ix 27.) Mohammed is reported to have said of Mecca, "What a splendid city thou art, if I had not been driven out of thee by my tribe I would dwell in no other place but in thee. It is not man but God who has made Mecca sacred. My people will be always safe in this world and the next as long as they respect Mecca." (Mishkat book XL, ch. xv.)

The sacred boundaries of Mecca and Medina not only shut out all unbelievers, but they make special demands of "purity and holiness" (in the Moslem sense) on the part of the true believers. According to tradition it is not lawful to carry weapons or to fight within the limits of the *Haramain*. Its



MOHAMMEDAN PILGRIMS AT MECCA



THE SACRED WELL OF ZEMZEM AT MECCA



grass and thorns must not be cut nor must its game be molested. Some doctors of law hold that these regulations do not apply to Medina, but others make the burial-place of the prophet equally sacred with the place of his birth. The boundaries of this sacred territory are rather uncertain. Abd ul Hak says that when, at the time of the rebuilding of the Kaaba, Abraham, the friend of God, placed the black stone, its east, west, north and south sides became luminous, and wherever the light extended, became the boundaries of the sacred city! These limits are now marked by pillars of masonry, except on the Jiddah and Jairanah road where there is some dispute as to the exact boundary.

The sacred territory of Medina is ten or twelve miles in diameter, from Jebel 'Air to Saoor. Outside of these two centres all of the province of Hejaz is legally accessible to infidels, but the fanaticism of centuries has practically made the whole region round Mecca and Medina forbidden territory to any but Moslems. In Jiddah Christians are tolerated because of necessity, but were the Mullahs of Mecca to have their way not a Frankish merchant or consul would reside there for a single day.

Despite these regulations to shut out "infidels" from witnessing the annual pilgrimage and seeing the sacred shrines of the Moslem world, more than a score of travellers have braved the dangers of the transgression and escaped the pursuit of fanatics to tell the tale of their adventures.<sup>1</sup> Others have lost

<sup>1</sup> The first account of a European visiting Mecca is that of Ludovico Bartema, a gentleman of Rome, who visited the city in 1503; his narrative was published in 1555. The first Englishman was Joseph Pitts, the sailor from Exeter, in 1678; then followed the great Arabian traveller, John Lewis Burckhardt, 1814; Burton in 1853 visited both Mecca and Medina; H. Bicknell made the pilgrimage in 1862 and T. F. Keane in 1880. The narratives of each of these pilgrims have been published, and from them, and the travels of Ali Bey, and others, we know something of the Holy Land of Arabia. Ali Bey was in reality a Spaniard, called Juan Badia y Seblich, who visited Mecca and Medina in 1807 and left a

their life in the attempt even in recent years. Doughty<sup>1</sup> tells of a Christian who was foully murdered by Turkish soldiers when found in the limits of Medina in the summer of 1878. Burton at one time barely escaped being murdered because they suspected him of being an unbeliever.

Jiddah, the harbor of Mecca, is distant from the sacred city about sixty-five miles, and is in consequence the chief port of debarkation and embarkation for pilgrims. It has a rather pretty and imposing appearance from the sea, the houses being white and three or four stories high, surrounded by a wall and flanked by a half dozen lazy windmills of Dutch pattern<sup>1</sup>. Its streets are narrow, however, and indescribably dirty, so that the illusion of an Oriental picture is dispelled as soon as you set foot on shore. The sanitary condition of this port is the worst possible; evil odors abound, the water supply is precarious and bad, and a shower of rain is always followed by an outbreak of fever. The population is not over 20,000 of every Moslem nation under heaven, Galilee of "the believers". Its commercial importance, which once was considerable, has altogether declined. The opening of the Suez canal and the direct carrying of trade by ocean steamers dealt the deathblow to the extensive coast-trade of both Jiddah and the other Red Sea ports. The people of Jiddah, like those of Mecca, live by fleecing pilgrims, and when the traffic is brisk and pilgrims affluent they grow rich enough to go to Mecca and set up a larger establishment of the same sort. There are hotel-keepers, drummers, guides, money-changers, money-lenders, slave-deal-

long account of his travels in two volumes illustrated by many beautiful engravings. Burton's account of his pilgrimage is best known, but Burckhardt's is more accurate and scholarly. Of modern books, that of the Dutch scholar, Snouck Hurgronje, who resided in Mecca for a long time, is by far the best. His *Mekka*, in two volumes, is accompanied by an atlas of photographs and gives a complete history of the city as well as a full account of its inhabitants and of the Java pilgrimage.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II., p. 157.

ers and even worse characters connected with the annual transfer of the caravans of *hajees* (pilgrims) from the coast inland. The number of pilgrims arriving at Jiddah by sea in 1893 was 92,625. In 1880 Mr. Blunt collected some interesting statistics of the total numbers attending the pilgrimage at Mecca,<sup>1</sup> and his investigations prove that the overland caravans are steadily becoming smaller.

Before any pilgrims are allowed to enter Jiddah harbor they are compelled to undergo ten days' quarantine at Kamaran, an island on the west coast of Arabia; this is the first woe. At Jiddah they remain only a few days and then having secured their *Mutawwaf* or official guide they proceed to Mecca. The

1 TABLE OF MECCA PILGRIMAGE, 1880.

(From Blunt's "Future of Islam.")

NATIONALITY OF PILGRIMS.	Arriving by Sea.	Arriving by Land.	Total Moslem Pop. represented.
Ottoman Subjects (excluding Arabia) . . . . .	8,500	1,000	22,000,000
Egyptians . . . . .	5,000	1,000	5,000,000
From "Barbary States" . . . . .	6,000	—	18,000,000
Yemen Arabs . . . . .	3,000	—	2,500,000
Oman and Hadramaut . . . . .	3,000	—	3,000,000
Nejd, etc., Arabs . . . . .	—	5,000	4,000,000
Hejaz (including Mecca) . . . . .	—	22,000	2,000,000
Negroes from Sudan . . . . .	2,000	—	10,000,000
" " Zanzibar . . . . .	1,000	—	1,500,000
Malabar from Cape of G. Hope . . . . .	150	—	—
Persians . . . . .	6,000	2,500	8,000,000
Indians (British Subjects) . . . . .	15,000	—	40,000,000
Malays and Javanese . . . . .	12,000	—	30,000,000
Chinese . . . . .	100	—	15,000,000
Mongols . . . . .	—	—	6,000,000
Russians, Tartars, etc. . . . .	—	—	5,000,000
Afghans and Baluchis . . . . .	—	—	3,000,000
(included in Ottoman Haj)	61,750	31,500	
Total pilgrims present at Arafat	93,250		175,000,000

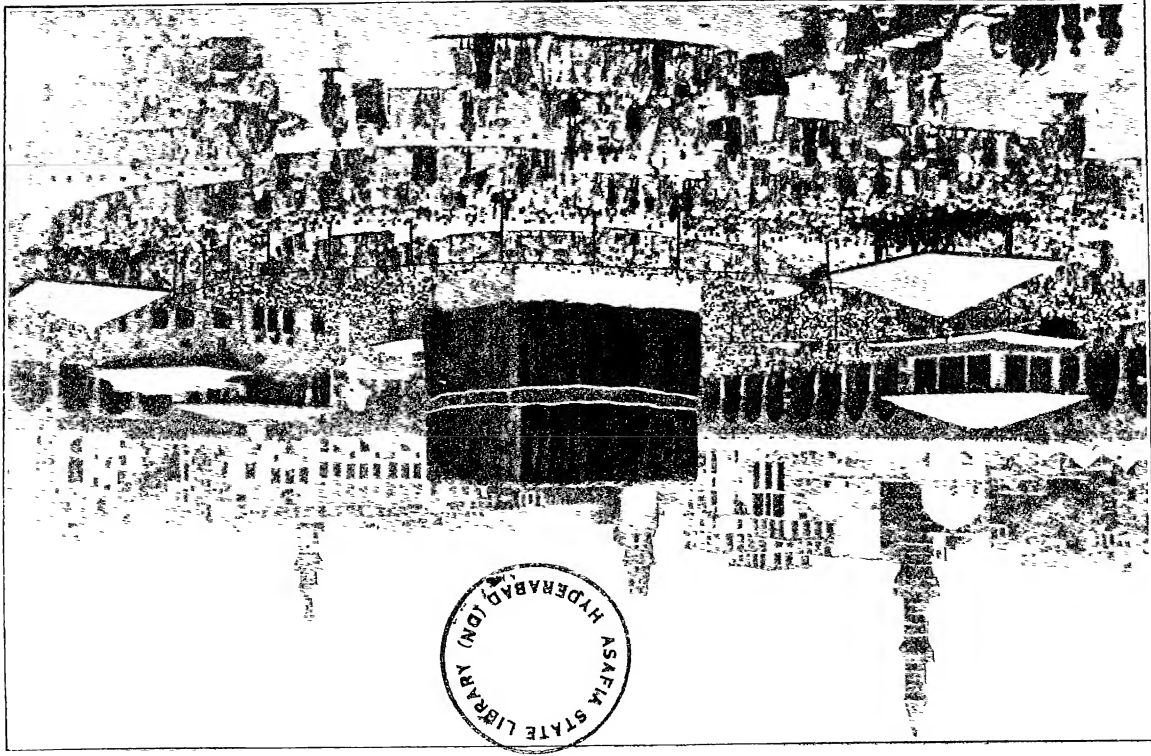


road is barren and uninteresting in the extreme. Halfway to Mecca is El Had where the road divides; one branch leads to Taif, the only fertile spot in this wilderness province, and the other proceeds to Mecca, the ancient name of which was Bakkah.

Were we to believe one half of what is said by Moslem writers in praise of Mecca it would prove the Holy City to be a very paradise of delights, a centre of learning and the paragon of earthly habitations. But the facts show it to be far otherwise. The location of the city is unfortunate. It lies in a hot sandy valley absolutely without verdure and surrounded by rocky barren hills, destitute of trees or even shrubs. The valley is about 300 feet wide and 4,000 feet long, and slopes toward the south. The Kaaba or Beit Allah is located in the bed of the valley and all the streets slope toward it, so that it is almost closed in on every side by houses and walls, and stands as it were in the pit of the theatre. The houses are built of dark stone and are generally lofty in order to accommodate as many pilgrims as possible in the limited space. The streets are nearly all unpaved and in summer the sand and dust are as disagreeable as is the black mud in the rainy season. Strangely enough, although the city itself and even the Kaaba have more than once suffered from destructive floods that have poured down the narrow valley, Mecca is poorly provided with water. There are few cisterns to catch the rains and the well water is brackish. The famous well of Zemzem has an abundance of water but it is not fit to drink.<sup>1</sup> The best water is brought by an aqueduct from the vicinity of Arafat six or seven miles distant and sold for a high price by a water-trust which annually fills the coffers of the Shereef of

<sup>1</sup> Professor Hankin in the *British Medical Journal* for June, 1894, published the result of his analysis of Zemzem water as follows "Total solid in a gallon, 259, Chlorine, 51.24; Free ammonia, parts per million, 0.93, Albuminoid ammonia, .45. It contains an amount of solids greater than that in any well water used for potable purposes."

PILGRIMS AROUND THE KABBA IN THE SACRED MOSQUE AT MECCA





Mecca This official is the nominal and often the real governor of the city. He is chosen from the *Sayyids* or descendants of Mohammed living in Hejaz or secures the high office by force. His tenure of office is subject to the approval and authority of the Turkish Sultan, whose garrisons occupy the fort near the town.

The Sacred Mosque, (Mesjid el Haram) containing the Kaaba or Beit Allah is the prayer-centre of the Mohammedan world and the objective point of thousands of pilgrims every year. According to Moslem writers it was first constructed in heaven, 2,000 years before the creation of the world. Adam, the first man, built the Kaaba on earth exactly under the spot occupied by its perfect model in heaven. The 10,000 angels appointed to guard this house of God seem to have been very remiss in their duty for it has often suffered at the hands of men and from the elements. It was destroyed by the flood and rebuilt by Ishmael and Abraham. The legends connected with its construction and history fill many pages of the Moslem traditions and commentaries. The name Kaaba means a *cube*; but the building is not built true to line and is in fact an unequal trapezium.<sup>1</sup> Because of its location in a hollow and its black-cloth covering these inequalities are not apparent to the eye

The Kaaba proper stands in an oblong space 250 paces long by 200 broad. This open space is surrounded by colonnades used for schools and as the general rendezvous of pilgrims. It is in turn surrounded by the outer temple wall with its nineteen gates and six minarets. The Mosque is of much more recent date than the Kaaba which was well known as an idolatrous Arabian shrine long before the time of Mohammed. The Sacred Mosque and its Kaaba contain the following treasures: the Black-Stone, the well of Zemzem, the great pulpit, the staircase, and the *Kubattain* or two small mosques of Saab and

<sup>1</sup> Its measurements, according to Ali Bey, are 37 ft. 2 in., 31 ft. 7 in., 38 ft 4 in., 29 ft. and its height is 34 ft. 4 in.

Abbas The remainder of the space is occupied by pavements and gravel arranged to accommodate and distinguish the four orthodox sects in their devotions.

The Black-Stone is undoubtedly the oldest treasure of Mecca. Stone-worship was an Arabian form of idolatry in very ancient times and relics of it remain in many parts of the peninsula. Maximus Tyrius wrote in the second century, "the Arabians pay homage to I know not what god which they represent by a quadrangular stone." The Guebars or ancient Persians assert that the black stone was an emblem of Saturn and was left in the Kaaba by Mahabad. We have the Moslem tradition that it came down snow-white from heaven and was blackened by the touch of sin—according to one tradition, that of an impure woman, and according to another by the kisses of thousands of believers. It is probably an aerolite and owes its reputation to its fall from the sky. Moslem historians do not deny that it was an object of worship before Islam, but they escape the moral difficulty and justify their prophet by idle tales concerning the stone and its relation to all the patriarchs beginning with Adam.

The stone is a fragment of what appears like black volcanic rock sprinkled with irregular reddish crystals worn smooth by the touch of centuries. It is held together by a broad band of metal, said to be silver, and is imbedded in the southeast corner of the Kaaba five feet from the ground. It is not generally known that there is a second sacred stone at the corner facing the south. It is called Rakn el Yemeni or Yemen pillar and is frequently kissed by pilgrims although according to the correct ritual it should only be saluted by a touch of the right hand

The well of Zemzem is located near the Makam Hanbali, the place of prayer of this sect. The building which encloses the well was erected in A. H. 1072 (A. D. 1661) and its interior is of white marble. Mecca perchance owes its origin as an old Arabian centre to this medicinal spring with its abundant supply of purgative waters for the nomads to-day go long distances





to visit sulphur and other springs in various parts of Arabia. The well of Zemzem is one of the great sources of income to the Meccans. The water is carried about for sale on the streets and in the mosques in curious pitchers made of unglazed earthenware. They are slightly porous so as to cool the water, which is naturally always of a lukewarm temperature, and are all marked with certain mystical characters in black wax. Crowds assemble around the well during the pilgrimage and many coppers fall to the share of the lucky Meccans who have the privilege of drawing the water for the faithful.

The pilgrimage to Mecca should be performed in the twelfth lunar month of the calendar called *Dhu el Haj*. It is incumbent on every believer except for lawful hindrance because of poverty or illness. Mohammed made it the fifth pillar of religion and more than anything else it has tended to unify the Moslem world. The Koran teaching regarding the duties of pilgrims at the Sacred Mosque, is as follows: "Proclaim to the peoples a Pilgrimage. Let them come to thee on foot and on every fleet camel arriving by every deep defile." (Surah xxii 28.) "Verily As Safa and Al Marwa are among the signs of God: whoever then maketh a pilgrimage to the temple or visiteth it shall not be to blame if he go round about them both." (ii. 153) "Let the pilgrimage be made in the months already known and who so undertaketh the pilgrimage therein let him not know a woman, nor transgress nor wrangle in the pilgrimage. . . . It shall be no crime in you if ye seek an increase from your Lord (by trade); and when ye pass swiftly on from Arafat then remember God near the holy Mosque. . . . Bear God in mind during the stated days; but if any haste away in two days it shall be no fault to him, and if any tarry it shall be no fault in him" (Surah ii. *passim*.)

From the Koran alone no definite idea of the pilgrim's duties can be gleaned; but fortunately for all true believers the Prophet's perfect example handed down by tradition leaves nothing in doubt and prescribes every detail of conduct with



ridiculous minuteness. The orthodox way is as follows : arrived within a short distance of Mecca the pilgrims, male and female, put off their ordinary clothing and assume the garb of a *hajee*. It consists of two pieces of white cloth one of which is tied around the loins and the other thrown over the back ; sandals may be worn but not shoes and the head must be left uncovered. (In idolatrous days the Arabs did not wear any clothing in making the circuit of the Kaaba ) On facing Mecca the pilgrim pronounces the *nyah* or "intention" :

" Here I am, O Allah, here I am ;  
 No partner hast Thou, here I am ;  
 Verily praise and riches and the kingdom are to Thee ;  
 No partner hast Thou, here am I."

After certain legal ablutions the pilgrim enters the Mosque by the Bab-el-salam and kisses the Black-Stone making the circuit, running, around the Kaaba seven times (In idolatrous days the Arabs did this in imitation of the motions of the planets , a remnant of their Sabeian worship ) Another special prayer is said and then the pilgrim proceeds to Makam Ibrahim, where Abraham is said to have stood when he rebuilt the Kaaba. There the *hajee* goes through the regular genuflections and prayers. He drinks next from the holy well and once more kisses the Black-Stone. Then follows the running between Mounts Safa and Merwa Proceeding outward from the Mosque by the gate of Safa he ascends the hill reciting the 153d verse of the Surah of the Cow. "Verily Safa and Merwa are the signs of God." Having arrived at the summit of the mount he turns to the Kaaba and three times recites the words :

" There is no god but God !  
 God is great !  
 There is no god save God alone !  
 He hath performed His promise  
 and hath aided His servant and  
 put to flight the hosts of in-  
 fidels by Himself alone !"

He then runs from the top of Safa through the valley to the summit of Merwa seven times repeating the aforesaid prayers each time on both hills. This is the sixth day, on the evening of which the pilgrim again encompasses the Kaaba. On the next day there is a sermon from the grand pulpit. On the eighth day the pilgrim goes three miles distant to Mina, where Adam longed for his lost paradise (1) and there spends the night. The next morning he leaves for Arafat, another hill about eleven miles from Mecca, hears a second sermon, returning before nightfall to Muzdalifa, a place halfway between Mina and Arafat.

The following day is the great day of the pilgrimage. It is called the day of Sacrifice and is simultaneously celebrated all over the Moslem world.<sup>1</sup> Early in the morning the pilgrim proceeds to Mina where there are three pillars called, the "Great Devil," the "Middle Pillar" and the "First One." At these dumb idols the "monotheist" flings seven pebbles and as he throws them says: "In the name of Allah and Allah is mighty, in hatred of the devil and his shame, I do this." He then performs the sacrifice, a sheep, goat, cow or camel according to the means of the pilgrim. The victim is placed facing the Kaaba and a knife plunged into the animal's throat with the cry, *Allahu Akbar*. This ceremony concludes the pilgrimage proper; the hair and nails are then cut and the *ihram* or pilgrims' garb is doffed for ordinary clothing. Three days more are sometimes counted as belonging to the pilgrimage, the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth days, called *Eyyam-ut-tashrik*, or days of drying flesh, because during them the flesh of the sacrifices is cut into slices and dried in the sun to be eaten on the return journey.

After the Meccan pilgrimage most Moslems go to Medina to visit the tomb of Mohammed, the Wahabees however consider

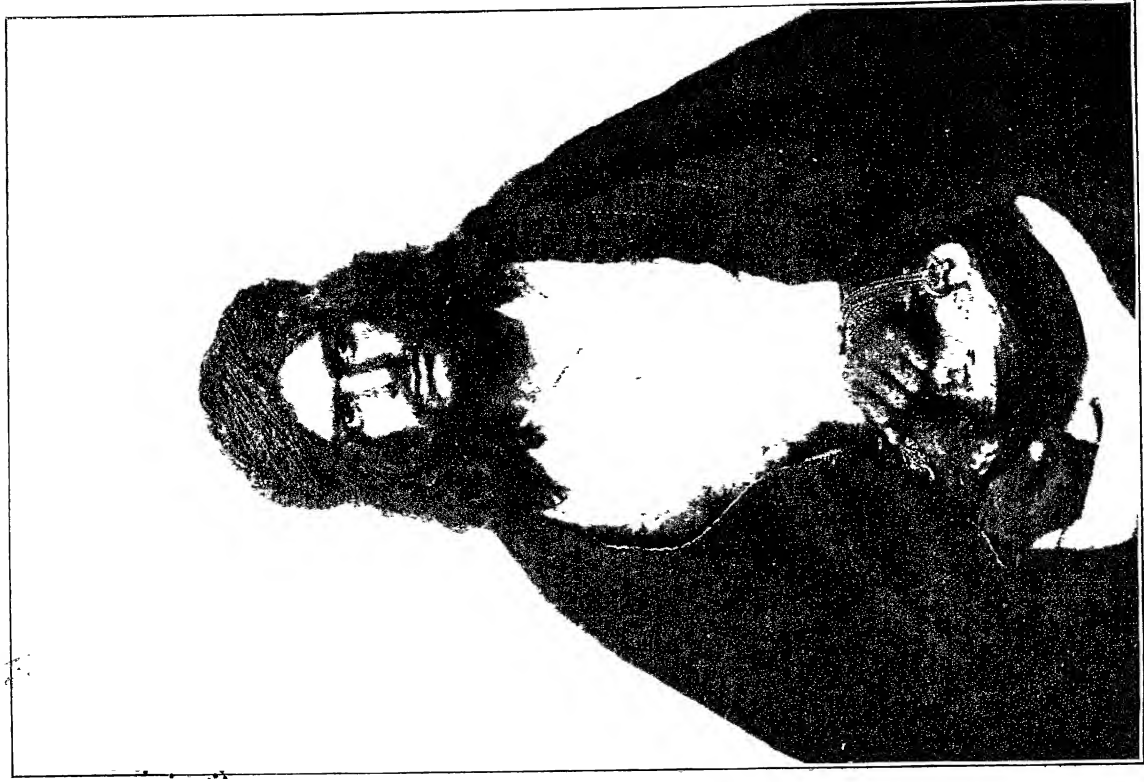
<sup>1</sup> This religion which denies an atonement and teaches that Christ was not crucified yet has for its great festival a feast of sacrifice to commemorate the obedience of Abraham and the substitute provided by God!

this "infidelity" and honor of the creature more than of the Creator. Other Moslems base their conduct on the saying of the prophet himself, *Man yuhajja wa lam ye-zurni fakad jefani*, "who goes on Haj and does not visit me has insulted me!" The Meccans call themselves "neighbors of God" and the people of Medina "neighbors of the prophet." For long ages a hot rivalry has existed between the two cities, a rivalry which, beginning in the taunt or jest, often ends in bloodshed.

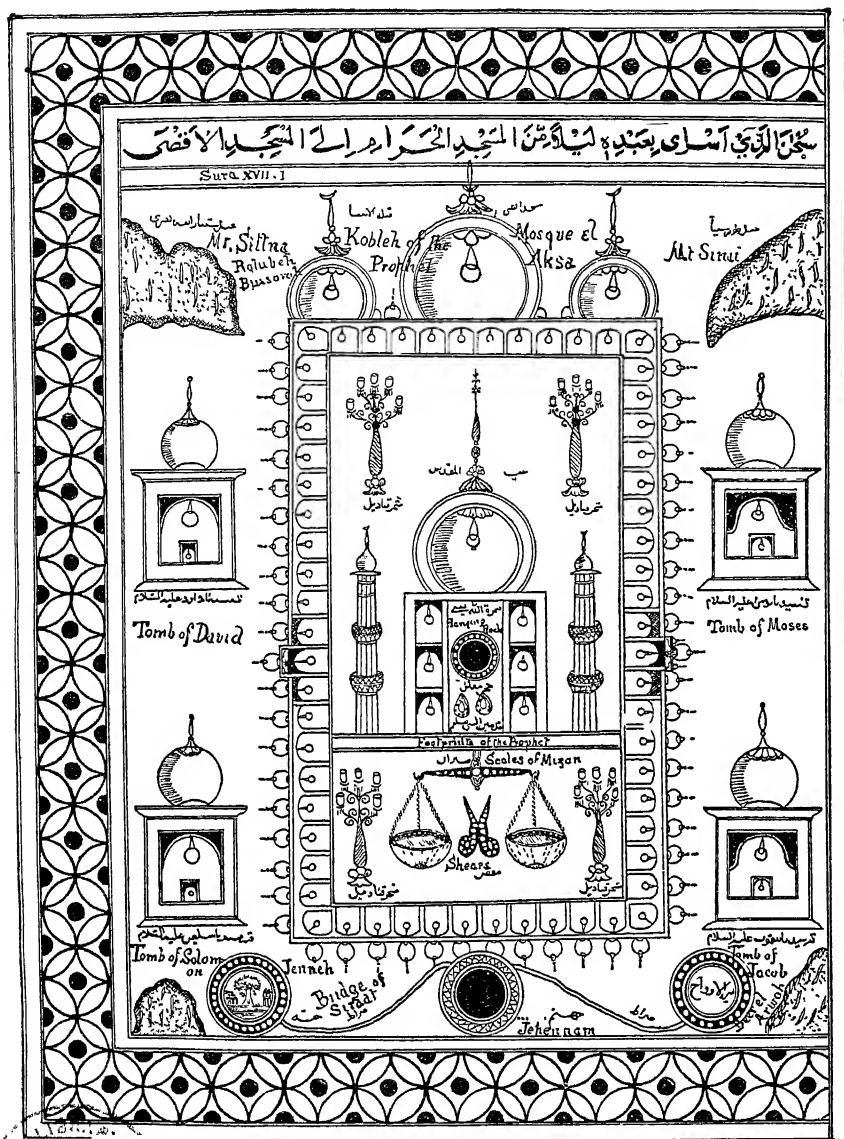
The pilgrim, having completed all legal requirements, is sure to visit the proper authorities and secure a *certificate* to prove to his countrymen that he is a real Hajee and to substantiate his religious boasting in days to come. The certificate is also required when one goes on pilgrimage for a deceased Moslem or a wealthy Moslem who is bedridden. In such a case the substitute has all the pleasures (!) of the journey at the expense of his principal but the merit goes to the man who pays the bills and who naturally craves the receipt. The certificate is of various forms and contains crude pictures of the holy places and verses from Koran.

Needless to relate these certificates cost money, as does everything at Mecca save the air you breathe. No honest Moslem ever spoke with praise of the citizens of Mecca; many are their proverbs to prove why wickedness flourishes in the courts of Allah. And European travellers agree that of all Orientals the Meccans take the palm for thoroughgoing rascality. Ali Bey dilates on the lewdness of the men and the looseness of the women of Mecca. Hurgronje unblushingly lifts the veil that hides the corruption of the sacred temple service with its army of eunuch police, and pictures the slave-market in full swing within a stone's throw of the Kaaba. B' 'on thus characterizes the men who live on their religion and grow fat (figuratively) by unveiling its mysteries to others:

"The Meccan is a covetous spendthrift. His wealth, lightly won, is lightly prized. Pay, pensions, stipends, presents, and the 'Ikram' here, as at Medina, supply the citizen with the



A TYPICAL ARAB OF YEMEN

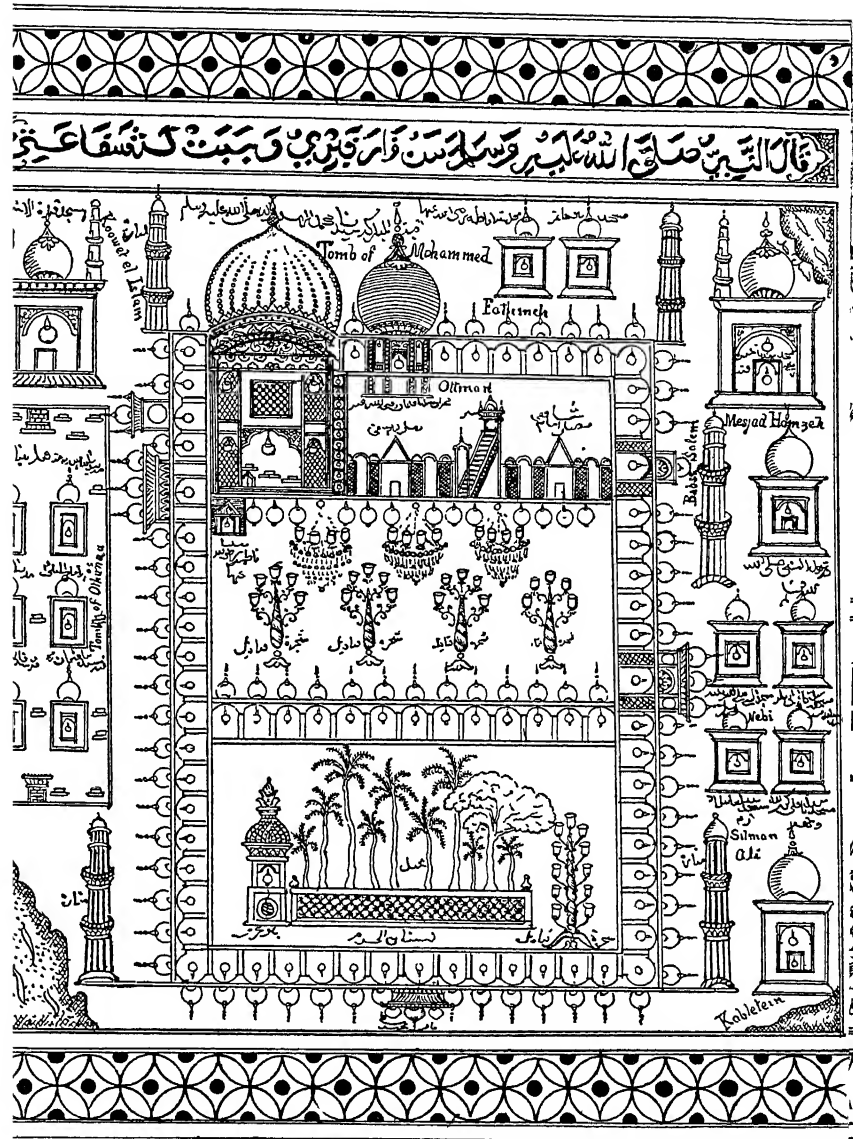


THE MECCA CERTIFICATE, which is given to pilgrims PLATE I. has, at the right-hand upper corner, the representation of Mount Arafat, a sacred mountain about 12 miles northeast of Mecca, which is pictured the Mesjed, or Mosque of Taif, the altar of Ishmael, the territory. There are also pictured the birthplaces of Mohammed. At

PLATE II pictures the quadrangular court of the Mecca of a basin, and is buried in the earth. The name of Abraham is connected with the praying places of the Malikis, the Hanafys, the Hanbalys and the

PLATE III. shows representations of the Holy Places of Mecca, the tomb of Othman, and various other shrines.

PLATE IV. contains the representation of the "Rock of God," or the "Suspended Stone," which shears which cut off the life of men. At the bottom is the great Bridge of the Siraat, since on it depends one's eternal destiny. Around this area are pictured



the sacred city, is looked upon by Moslems as practically a passport to heaven. In the upper left-hand corner is the representation of the Mosque of Muzdalifa and tents of the Pilgrims; to the left of this, the representation of the Kaaba; in Moslem tradition, is said to be the place where Adam and Eve met after the fall of Eve; to the right of this, the Dome of "Our Lord," the tomb of Amina and Khadijah; also the tomb of Mohammed. The large dome in the upper left-hand corner is the

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means of idleness. With him everything is on the most expensive scale, his marriage, his religious ceremonies, and his household expenses. His house is luxuriously furnished, entertainments are frequent, and the junketings of the women make up a heavy bill at the end of the year. It is a common practice for the citizen to anticipate the pilgrimage season by falling into the hands of the usurer. The most unpleasant peculiarities of the Meccans are their pride and coarseness of language. They look upon themselves as the cream of earth's sons, and resent with extreme asperity the least slighting word concerning the Holy City and its denizens. They plume themselves upon their holy descent, their exclusion of infidels, their strict fastings, their learned men, and their purity of language. In fact, their pride shows itself at every moment; but it is not the pride which makes a man too proud to do a dirty action. The Meccans appeared to me distinguished, even in this foul-mouthed East, by the superior licentiousness of their language. Abuse was bad enough in the streets, but in the house it became intolerable."<sup>1</sup>

Temporary marriages which are a mere cloak for open prostitution are common in Mecca and are indeed one of the chief means of livelihood to the natives.<sup>2</sup> Concubinage and divorce are more universal than in any other part of the Moslem world;<sup>3</sup> sodomy is practiced in the Sacred Mosque itself<sup>4</sup> and the suburbs of the city are the scene of nightly carnivals of iniquity, especially after the pilgrims have left and the natives are rich with the fresh spoils of the traffic.<sup>5</sup> As might be expected, superstition grows rife in such a soil and under such circumstances. All sorts of holy-places, legends, sacred rocks,

<sup>1</sup> This is the testimony of Captain Burton, the man who translated an unexpurgated text of the Arabian nights and left behind a book in manuscript which his wife had the good sense to destroy and so prevent its publication.

<sup>2</sup> Hurgonje, p. 5, Vol. II.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-64.

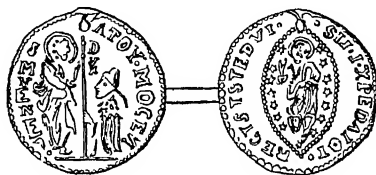
trees and houses abound Every Moslem saint who tarried in the city or died there has left something to be remembered and honored

Gross ignorance coupled with equal conceit seems to be the universal characteristic of the people of Mecca. Modern science is laughed at and everything turns, on the Ptolemaic system, around the little world of the Koran. Jinn are exorcised; witches and the evil-eye are avoided by amulets, in short all the superstitious practices of the Moslem world are cultivated in this centre of world-wide pilgrimage. Astrology still usurps the place of astronomy and it is considered blasphemy to profess to know the hour of an eclipse or the day of the new moon before it is revealed from heaven. Alchemy is the science that attracts the Meccan physician more than the marvels of surgery; potions of holy-writ or talismans are still in use for sprains and dislocations. Their ignorance of geography and history beyond the confines of the pilgrim-world is pathetic One of the chief Mullahs asked Hurgronje "how many days was the caravan journey from Moskop (Russia) to Andalusia (Spain)?" A government printing-press has been opened at Mecca in recent years and an official gazette is published, but even Turkish civilization and learning are considered far from orthodox for their ways partake too much of those of the "infidels" of the rest of Europe. Photography is a forbidden art and money with "images" of queens and emperors is only used with the prayer *istagfir allah*, "I ask pardon of God." On the other hand many old European coins no longer current are looked upon as being doubly valuable as amulets and charms One of these, the *Mishkash* is supposed to have special virtues for newly-married women

"The irony of history," as Hurgronje remarks, "was not satisfied that at Medina the grave of Mohammed who cursed saint-worship should become a centre of pilgrimage, but added the circumstance that at Mecca, Moslem women, who reject images and Christ-worship, should prize as an amulet the im-

age of Jesus and an Evangelist." Of course, the women themselves are in total ignorance of the inscription and character of the coin.

There is a great abundance of schools at Mecca but no education. Everything is on the old lines, beginning and end-



A CHRISTIAN COIN USED AS AN AMULET BY MECCAN WOMEN.<sup>1</sup>

ing with the Koran, that Procrustean bed for the human intellect. "The letter killeth." And it is the *letter* first, foremost and always that is the topic of study. The youth learn to read the Koran not to understand its meaning, but to drone it out professionally at funerals and feasts, so many chapters for so many shekels. Modern science or history are not even mentioned, much less taught, at even the high-schools of Mecca. Grammar, prosody, calligraphy, Arabian history, and the first elements of arithmetic, but chiefly the Koran commentaries and traditions, traditions, traditions, form the curriculum of the Mohammedan college. Those who desire a post-graduate course devote themselves to Mysticism (*Tassawaf*) or join an order of the Derwishes who all have their representative sheikhs at Mecca.

The method of teaching in the schools of Mecca, which can be taken as an example of the best that Arabia affords, is as follows. The child of intellectual promise is first taught his alphabet from a small wooden board on which they are written

<sup>1</sup> This coin is called *Mishkash* and is a Venetian coin of Duke Aloys Mocenigo I. (1570-77 A. D.). On one side the Duke is kneeling before St Mark the patron saint of Venice and on the other is the image of Christ surrounded by stars.



by the teacher ; slates are unknown. Then he learns the *Abjad* or numerical value of each letter—a useless proceeding at present as the Arabic notation, originally from India, is everywhere in use. After this he learns to write down the ninety-nine names of Allah and to read the first chapter of the Koran, then he attacks the last two chapters, because they are short. The teacher next urges him through the book, making the pupil read at the top of his voice. The greatest strictness is observed as to pronunciation and pauses but nothing whatever is said to explain the meaning of the words. Having thus *finished* the Koran, that is, read it through once, the pupil takes up the elements of grammar, learning rules by rote both of *ṣarf* (inflection) and *nahw* (syntax). Then follow the liberal sciences, *al-mantik* (logic), *al-hisab* (arithmetic), *al-jabr* (algebra), *al-ma'ana wa'l beyan* (rhetoric and versification), *al-fikh* (jurisprudence), *al-akāid* (scholastic theology), *at-tafsir* (exegetics), *ilm ul-usul* (science of sources of interpretation) and lastly, the capstone of education, *al-ahādīth* (traditions). Instruction is given by lectures ; text-books are seldom used ; lessons begin in the morning and continue for a few hours ; in the afternoon they are interrupted by prayer-time. Even at Mecca the favorite place for teaching is in the Mosque-court where constant interruptions and distractions must make it pleasant for a lazy pupil.

A WOMAN OF MECCA



A MECCAN WOMAN IN HER BRIDAL COSTUME





## IV

### THE HOLY LAND OF ARABIA—MEDINA

“Within the sanctuary or bounds of the city all sins are forbidden, but the several schools advocate different degrees of strictness. The Imam Malik, for instance, allows no latrinæ nearer to El Medina than Jebel Ayr, a distance of about three miles. He also forbids slaying wild animals, but at the same time he specifies no punishment for the offence. All authors strenuously forbid, within the boundaries, slaying man, (except invaders, infidels and the sacrilegious) drinking spirits and leading an immoral life. In regard to the dignity of the sanctuary there is but one opinion; a number of traditions testify to its honor, praise its people and threaten dreadful things to those who injure it or them”—*Burton*.

ABOUT seventy miles southeast of Mecca is the small but pleasant town of Taif, to which the pashas condemned for the murder of Abdul Aziz Sultan were banished. It is one of the most interesting and attractive towns of all Arabia, being surrounded by gardens and vineyards from which Mecca has been supplied for ages. The tropical rains last from four to six weeks at Taif, and good wells abound to water the gardens when the rains cease, so that the place is famous for its garden-produce. In close proximity to the barren Mecca district Taif is a paradise for the pilgrim and a health resort for the jaundiced, fever-emaciated Meccan. At Taif Doughty saw three old stone idols of “the days of ignorance”; *El Uzza*, a block of granite some twenty feet long; another called *Hubbal*, with a cleft in the middle, “by our Lord Aly’s sword-stroke”; and *El Lat*, an unshapely crag of grey granite. These were earlier stone-gods of the Arab, and now lie forsaken in the dirt, while their brother-god, the famous Black-Stone, receives the reverence of millions!

The road from Mecca to El Medina—"the city"—so called because the prophet chose it as his home in time of persecution—leads nearly due north. It is an uninteresting, and for the most part, a forsaken country that separates the rival cities. Burton writes that it reminded him of the lines,

" Full many a waste I've wandered o'er,  
 Clomb many a crag, crossed, many a shore,  
 But, by my halidome  
 A scene so rude, so wild as this,  
 Yet so sublime in barrenness,  
 Ne'er did my wandering footsteps press,  
 Where'er I chanced to roam."

There are two caravan-routes, both of which are used by the pilgrims, but the eastern road is used most frequently.<sup>1</sup>

The region between Mecca and Medina is the home of the ancient poets of Arabia and is classic ground. The seven Moallakat or suspended poems find their scene in this region. Lebid wrote:

" Deserted is the village—waste the halting place and home,  
 At Mina, o'er Rijam and Ghul wild beasts unheeded roam,  
 On Rayyan hill the channel lines have left their naked trace,  
 Time-worn as primal writ that dints the mountain face "

El Medina, formerly called *Yathrib*, is now also called *El Munowera*, the "illuminated," and devout Moslems commonly claim to see, on approaching the city, a luminous haze hanging over its mosques and houses. The legends and superstitions that cluster around the last resting-place of the Prophet are not less in number nor less credible than those that glorify the place of his birth, although the town is only about

<sup>1</sup>The western or coast route goes by Koleis, Rabek, Mastura, and near Jebel Eyub (Job's Mountain) over Jebel Subh, then to Suk-es-Safra and Suk el Jedid to Medina. The eastern road was the one taken by Burton, and goes by way of El Zaribah, El Sufena, El Suerkish, etc., a distance 248 miles.

half the size and contains 16,000 inhabitants. It consists of three principal divisions: the town proper, the fort and the suburbs. It is surrounded by a wall forty feet high, the streets are narrow and unpaved; the houses are flat-roofed and double-storied.

The current dispute, however, for many centuries has been regarding the relative sanctity and importance of the two cities, Mecca and Medina. A visit to Medina is called *Ziyarat*, as that to Mecca is called *Haj*; the latter is obligatory by order of the Koran, while the former is meritorious on the authority of tradition. The orthodox further stipulate, that circumambulation around the prophet's tomb at Medina is not allowed as around the Kaaba at Mecca nor should men wear the *ihram*, nor kiss the tomb. On the other hand, to spit upon it or treat it with contempt, as the Wahabees did, is held to be the act of an infidel. To quote again from Burton: "The general consensus of Islam admits the superiority of the Beit Allah at Mecca to the whole world; and declares Medina to be more venerable than every part of Mecca, and consequently all the earth, except only the Beit Allah. This last is a *juste milieu* view by no means in favor with the inhabitants of either place."

The one thing that gives Medina claim to sanctity is the prophet's tomb, and yet there is some doubt as to whether he is really buried in the mosque raised to his honor; of course every Moslem, learned or ignorant, believes it, but there are many arguments against the supposition.<sup>1</sup> One of these argu-

<sup>1</sup> These arguments may be stated briefly as follows:

1. A tumult followed the announcement of the prophet's death, and Omar threatened destruction to any one who asserted it. Is it probable that a quiet interment took place?

2. Immediately after Mohammed's death a dispute about the succession arose, in the ardor of which, according to the Shi'ahs, the house of Ali and Fatima, near the present tomb, were threatened by fire.

3. The early Moslems would not be apt to *reverence* the grave of the

ments alone would have little value against so old a tradition and practice, but their cumulative force cannot be denied, and throws serious doubt on the question whether the present mosque of the prophet contains any trace of his remains. On the other hand pious Moslems affirm that the prophet is not

prophet, as do those of later date, when tradition has exalted him above the common humanity. The early Moslems were indifferent as to the exact spot

4 The shape of the prophet's tomb was not known in early times, nor is it given in the traditions, so that we find convex graves in some lands and flat in others

5. The accounts of the learned among the Moslems are discrepant as to the burial of Mohammed.

6. Shiah schismatics had charge of the sepulchre for centuries, and because of its proximity to the graves of Abubekr and Omar, it was in their interest to remove the body

7. Even the present position of the grave, with relation to other graves, is in dispute, because the tomb-chamber (*Hujrah*) is closely guarded by eunuchs, who do not allow any one to enter

8 The tale of the blinding light which surrounds the prophet's tomb seems a plausible story to conceal a defect

9. Mohammed el Halebi, the Sheikh-el Ulema of Damascus, assured Burton that he was permitted to pass the door leading into the tomb-chamber, and that he saw no trace of a sepulchre

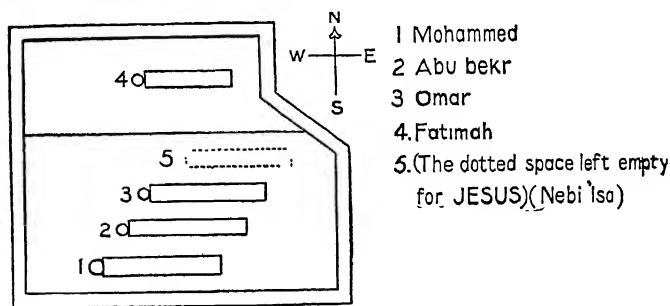
10. Moslem historians admit that an attempt was made in A. H. 412 to steal the bodies of Mohammed and the two companions by the third Fatimite Caliph of Egypt; they relate marvels connected with the failure of the attempt, and assert that a trench was dug deep all around the graves and filled with molten lead to prevent the theft of the body.

11 In A. H. 654 the mosque was destroyed by a volcanic eruption, according to the Moslem historians, but the tomb-chamber escaped all damage! Again in A. H. 887 it was struck by lightning. "On this occasion," says El Samanhudi (quoted by Burckhardt) "the interior of the Hujrah (tomb-chamber) was cleared and three deep graves were found in the inside full of rubbish, but the author of this history, who himself entered it, saw no trace of tombs" The same author declared that the coffin containing the dust of Mohammed was cased with silver.

12 Lastly the Shiah and Sunni accounts of the prophet's death and burial are contradictory as to the exact place of burial.

really dead, but "eats and drinks in the tomb until the day of resurrection," and is as much alive as he ever was

The Mesjid-el-Nebi or prophet's mosque at Medina is about 420 feet long by 340 broad. It is built nearly north and south and has a large interior courtyard, surrounded by porticoes. From the western side we enter the *Rauzah* or prophet's garden. On the north and west it is not divided from the rest of the portico, on the south side runs a dwarf wall and on the east it is bounded by the lattice-work of the *Hujrah*. This is an irregular square of about fifty feet separated on all sides from the walls of the Mosque by a broad passage. Inside there are said to be three tombs carefully concealed inside the iron railing by a heavy curtain arranged like a four-post bed. The *Hujrah* has four gates, all kept locked except the fourth which admits only the officers in charge of the treasure, the eunuchs who sweep the floor, light the lamps and carry away the presents thrown into the enclosure by devotees. It is commonly asserted that many



REPORTED ARRANGEMENT OF THE INTERIOR OF THE HUJRAH

early Moslem saints and warriors desired the remaining space for their grave, but that by Mohammed's wish it is reserved for 'Isa on his second coming and death. The story of a coffin suspended by magnets has of course no foundation in fact and may have arisen from the crude drawings of the tombs.



The *ziyarah* at the Mosque consists in prayers and alms-giving with silent contemplation on the sacred character of Mohammed. The following sample "prayer" offered at the shrine of Fatima, gives some idea of what is to Christian ears a blasphemous service. "Peace be upon thee, O daughter of the apostle of Allah! Thou mother of the excellent seed. Peace be upon thee thou Lady amongst women Peace be upon thee, O Fifth of the people of the Prophet's garment! A pure one, O virgin! Peace be on thee, O spouse of our Lord, Ali el Murtaza, O mother of Hasan and Hussein, the two Moons, the two Lights, the two Pearls, the two princes of the youth of Heaven, the Coolness of the eyes of true believers! etc., etc." The prayers offered at the prophet's grave are more fulsome in their praise and of much greater length. What would the camel-driver of Mecca say if he heard them?

As at Mecca so at Medina the townspeople, one and all, live on the pilgrims. The keeper of the Mosque is a Turkish Pasha with a large salary and many perquisites, there are treasurers and professors and clerks and sheikhs of these eunuchs kept on salary. Sweepers and porters, all eunuchs, and guides as at Mecca who live by backsheesh or extortion. Water-carriers here too peddle about the brackish fluid by the cupful to thirsty pilgrims. Those who are not in the service of the Mosque usually keep boarding-houses, or sell prayers which are to be made once a year at the prophet's tomb, for the absent pilgrim. Most of the officials receive their salaries from Constantinople and Carro.

The population of Medina is not less a mixed multitude than that of Mecca; here also the observation of Zehm holds true, "every pilgrimage brings new fathers." Burton testifies, "It is not to be believed that in a town garrisoned by Turkish troops, full of travelled traders, and which supports itself by plundering *Hajis* the primitive virtues of the Arab could exist. The Meccans, a dark people, say of the Madani, that their hearts are as black as their skins are white. This is of course

exaggerated ; but it is not too much to assert that pride, pugnacity, a peculiar point of honor, and a vindictiveness of wonderful force and patience, are the only characteristic traits of Arab character which the citizens of El Medina habitually display " Intoxicating liquors are made at Medina and sold, although not openly.

There are two colleges with "libraries" at Medina and many mosque-schools. In Burckhardt's day he charged the town with utter ignorance and illiteracy, but now they devote themselves apparently to literature, at least in a measure.

The climate of Medina is better than that of Mecca and the winters are cold and rigorous. Mohammed is reputed to have said, "he who patiently endures the cold of El Medina and the heat of Mecca, merits a reward in paradise."

Returning from the lesser pilgrimage to Medina the traveller can retrace his steps to Mecca, and thence to Jiddah, or go to the nearer port of Yanbo (Yembo) and thence return home by steamer or sailing-vessel. The distance by camels' route, between Medina and the port is 132 miles, six stages, although a good dromedary can make it in two days. At Yanbo the sultan's dominions in Arabia begin, for the coast northward pertains to Egypt. The town resembles Jiddah in outward appearance, has 400 or 500 houses built of white coral rock, dirty streets and a precarious water supply. Sadlier, (1820) after his journey across the peninsula, visited Yanbo, and describes it as "a miserable Arab seaport surrounded by a wall" ; Yanbo has, however, a good harbor, and was in earlier days, a large and important place ; it has been identified with Iambia village on Ptolemy's map a harbor of the old Nabateans

Thus ends our pilgrimage through the Holy Land of Arabia. Let us in conclusion ponder the words of Stanley Lane Poole as to the place which Mecca and the pilgrimage holds in the Mohammedan religion "It is asked how the destroyer of idols could have reconciled his conscience to the circuits of the Kaaba and the veneration of the Black-Stone covered with

adoring kisses The rites of the pilgrimage cannot certainly be defended against the charge of superstition ; but it is easy to see why Mohammed enjoined them . . . He well knew the consolidating effect of forming a centre to which his followers should gather, and hence he reasserted the sanctity of the Black-Stone that 'came down from heaven', he ordained that everywhere throughout the world the Moslem should pray looking toward the Kaaba, and enjoined him to make the pilgrimage thither. Mecca is to the Moslem what Jerusalem is to the Jew It bears with it all the influence of centuries of associations. It carries the Moslem back to the cradle of his faith and the childhood of his prophet. . . . And, most of all, it bids him remember that all his brother Moslems are worshipping toward the same sacred spot ; that he is one of a great company of believers united by one faith, filled with the same hopes, reverencing the same thing, worshipping the same God."

## V

### ADEN AND AN INLAND JOURNEY

"Aden is a valley surrounded by the sea, its climate is so bad that it turns wine into vinegar in the space of ten days. The water is derived from cisterns and is also brought in by an aqueduct two farsongs long."

—*Ibn-el-Mojawir*. (A D 1200)

ARABIA is unfortunate because, like a chestnut-burr, its exterior is rough and uninviting. In scenery and climate, Yemen fares worst of all the provinces. The two gateways to Arabia Felix are very *infelix*. What could be more dreary and dull and depressing than the "gloomy hills of darkness" that form the background to Aden as seen from the harbor? There is no verdure, no vegetation visible; everywhere there is the same appearance of a cinder heap. And where can one find a more filthy, hot, sweltering, odorous native town than Hodeidah? Yet these two places are the gateways to the most beautiful, fertile, populous and healthful region of all Arabia.

Yemen is best known of all the provinces, and has been quite thoroughly explored by a score of intrepid travellers.<sup>1</sup> Most people, however, travelling in a P. and O. Steamer, calling at Aden for coal, remain in total ignorance of the fair highlands just beyond the dark hills that hide the horizon.

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr, 1763; Seetzen, 1810, Clutten, 1836, Dr. Wolff, 1836; Owen, 1857; Dotta, 1837; Passama, 1842, Arnaud, 1843, Van Maltzan, 1871; Halvéy, 1870; Millingen, 1874; Renzo Manzoni, 1879; Glaser, 1880, Deffer, 1888; Haig, 1889; Harris, 1892; and later travellers. Deffer is the authority on the flora, Glaser on the antiquities, Manzoni on the Turks and their government, Haig on the agricultural population, and Harris tells of the recent rebellions. Niebuhr's magnificent volumes are still good authority on the geography and natural history of Yemen.

Yemen extends from Aden to Asir on the north and eastward into Hadramaut for an indefinite distance. On the earlier maps Arabia Felix stretched as far as Oman—a great mountainous region with a temperate climate. An Arabian author, describing Yemen as it was before the time of Mohammed, wrote “Its inhabitants are all hale and strong, sickness is unknown, nor are there poisonous plants or animals; nor fools, nor blind people, and the women are ever young, the climate is like paradise and one wears the same garment summer and winter ”

The massive rock promontory of volcanic basalt called Aden, has from time immemorial been the gateway and the stronghold for all Yemen. It is generally agreed that Ezekiel, the prophet, referred to Aden when he wrote. “Haran and Canneh and *Eden*, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur and Chilmad, were thy merchants.” The place was fortified and its wonderful rock cisterns were probably first constructed by the early Himyarites. A Christian church was erected at Aden by the embassy of the Emperor Constantius, A. D. 342, and Aden was for a long time in the hands of the Christian kings of Yemen. Then it fell a prey to the Abyssinians and next to the Persians, about the time when Mohammed was born. Albuquerque in 1513 with his Portuguese warriors laid siege to Aden for four days, but in spite of scaling-ladders and gunpowder could not take the town. The Mameluke Sultans of Egypt also failed to capture this fortress. In 1838 the English took it by storm and have held the place ever since.

Aden is now a British settlement, a commercial-centre, a coaling-station and a fortress; the last most emphatically. All the latest improvements in engineering and artillery have been put to use in fortifying the place. The ride from Steamer-Point to “the crater” or from the telegraph-station to the “Crescent” gives one some idea of the vast amount of money and labor expended to shape this Gibraltar and make it impregnable from land and sea. The isthmus is guarded by

massive lines of defence, strengthened by a broad ditch cut out of the solid rock ; bastions, casements and tunnels all serve one purpose , batteries, towers, arsenals, magazines, barracks ; mole-batteries toward the sea, mines in the harbor, obstruction piers and subsevient works,—everything tells of military strength, and the town has always a wailike aspect in perfect accord with its forbidding physical geography.

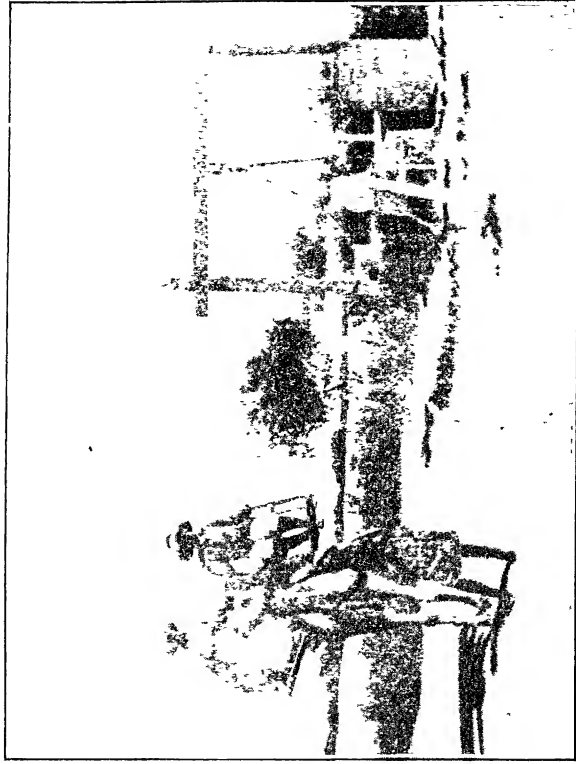
The inhabited peninsula is an irregular oval about fifteen miles in circumference ; it is in reality a large extinct crater formed of lofty precipitous hills the highest peak of which, Shem Shem, has an altitude of nearly 1,800 feet. The varieties of rock are numerous, and vary in color from light brown to dark green Pumice and tufas are very common , the former is an article of export. Water is very scarce, and there is almost no rainfall during some years. When there is a shower, the nature of the soil and the immense watershed for so small an area cause heavy torrents to pour down the valleys. These rare occasions are utilized to fill the huge tanks near Aden camp The tanks were built as early as 600 A. D. by the Yemenites who built besides the celebrated dam at Marib, and the many similar structures in various parts of Yemen. Water is also brought by an aqueduct from Sheikh Othman, seven miles distant, but the majority of the population is supplied from the government condensers. In spite of the desert character of the soil and the aridity of the climate Aden is not entirely without natural vegetation. Thomas Anderson of the Bengal Medical Service enumerates ninety-four species of plants found on the Aden peninsula, some of which are entirely unique. Most of the plants, however, are desert-dwellers with sharp thorns, an aromatic odor, and yield gums and resins

The Aden settlement has four centres of population ; Steamer-Point, the Crescent, the town of Maala and the "Camp" or Aden proper. A road, the only road in fact, extends from Steamer-Point on the west to Aden proper on the east, and no

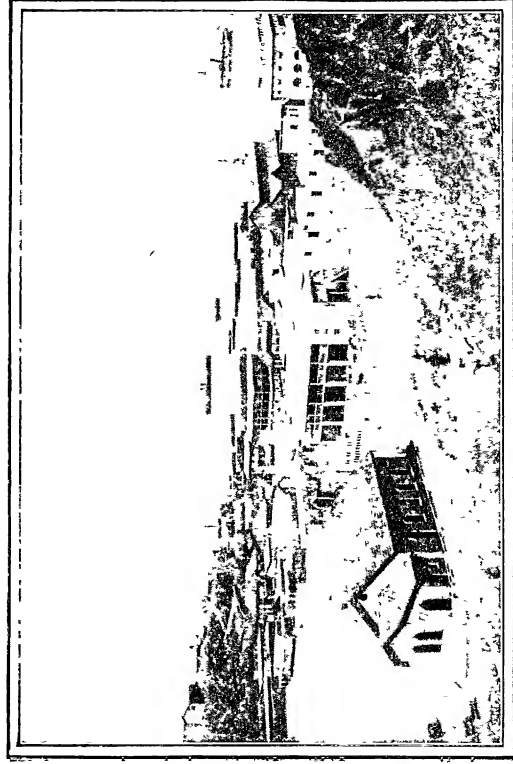
one can boast of having seen Aden who has not taken the ride in a *geri* from the landing-pier to the tanks. The Aden horses are of all creatures most miserable for the geri-drivers whip their horses much, but feed them little. The Crescent is a semi-circular range of houses and shops crowded against the mountain side; with a Hotel de l'Univers and a Hotel de l'Europe (both equally "Grand"), cafés, shops, banks, and offices. The post office, hospital, churches and barracks are further west toward the telegraph-station. A drive of about two miles brings us to the native town of Maala. Here the road forks, the lower one leading to the barrier-gate and Sheikh Othman, and the upper ascending the mountain through the gate of the fortifications and by a sharp declivity leading down to the town of Aden. It is not an Oriental town in its administration, but it has all the motley character of Port Said on its streets. Europeans, Americans, Africans, Asiatics and mixed races are all represented in the crowd of the market or the loungers in the streets. The total population is 30,000, including Chinese, Persians, Turks, Egyptians, Somalis, Hindus, Parsees, Jews and Arabs from every part of the peninsula. Aden is a great centre for native shipping, and the dhows and buggalows that sail every year from the Persian Gulf to Yemen and Jiddah always call at Aden *en route*. Also from Oman and Hadramaut the modern Sinbads run their craft into Aden to exchange produce or to lay in supplies for their voyages to the coast of Africa.

The distance from Aden to Yemen's old capital, Sana is nearly 200 miles in a direct line, but on my second journey thither, in 1894, I was obliged to take a roundabout journey to Taiz, because of an Arab uprising. This and the mountainous character of the country made the distance over 250 miles. This route passes through, or near, all the important towns of Yemen south of Sana.

With my Bedouin companion, Nasir, I left Sheikh Othman early on the second morning of July. We reached a small



TRAVELLING IN SOUTHERN ARABIA



THE KEITH FALCONER MEMORIAL CHURCH IN ADEN





village, Wahat, at noon, the thermometer registering 96° in the shade. After a short rest we mounted the camels at seven o'clock in the evening for an all-night journey. Our course was through a barren region, and at daylight we entered Wady Mergia, with scanty vegetation, resting at a village of the same name under a huge acacia tree. The next day we entered the mountains, where rich vegetation showed a cooler climate. We passed several villages, Dar El Kadim, Khoteibah, Suk-el-Juma and others. As this was said to be a dangerous part of the road all the caravan, which we joined at Wahat, was on the look-out, with lighted rope-wicks for their flint-locks swinging from their shoulders and looking in the dark like so many fireflies. At three A. M. we had ascended to the head of the wady and rested for the day at Mabek. All the houses here are of stone, the booths of date-mats and twigs being only found on the maritime plain of Yemen. During the night there had been talk among the wild Arabs of the village of holding me as a hostage to obtain money from the English at Aden! But Nasir quieted them with a threefold Bedoun oath that I was not a government official nor an Englishman, but an American traveller.

The day after leaving Mabek brought us to the beginning of the happy valleys of Yemen, very different from the torrid coast. A country where the orange, lemon, quince, grape, mango, plum, apricot, peach, apple, pomegranate, fig, date, plantain and mulberry, each yield their fruit in season; where wheat, barley, maize, millet and coffee are staple products and where there is a glorious profusion of wild flowers—called “grass” by the unpoetic camel-drivers. A land whose mountains lift up their heads over 9,000 feet, terraced from chilly top to warm valley with agricultural amphitheatres, irrigated by a thousand rills and rivulets, some of them perennial, flowing along artificial channels or leaping down the rocks in miniature falls. A land where the oriole hangs her nest on the dark acacia, the wild doves hide in clefts of the rock and the chameleon sports his colors by the wayside under the tall

flowering cactus Such is Yemen The vegetation of Arabia Felix begins just before reaching Mufallis, on this route, where a Turkish castle and customhouse proclaim the boundary of Ottoman aggression

Beautiful was the air and scenery on our march. Arab peasants were at work in the fields, plowing<sup>1</sup> with oxen, repairing the walls of the terraces and opening the water-courses The women were all unveiled and had the picturesque costume universal in southern Yemen; their narrow trousers were fastened at the waist and ankles, while over their shoulders hung long mantle-like garments, low in the neck, girded, and fringed at the bottom with embroidered cloth of green or red. Here they wear a kind of light turban, but on the Hodeidah coast broad-brimmed straw hats cover the heads of the Yemen belles as they urge their donkeys to market.

At sunrise we were in sight of the highest peaks to the left of the wady-bed. One of them is crowned by a *walli* or saint's tomb of Saled bin Taka These tombs are common in Yemen and thousands of people visit them annually to ask intercession, each saint having a special day in the Moslem calendar. At Mocha the grave of the Arab sheikh Abu-el-Hassan Shadeli, who first discovered the use of coffee, is highly honored by distant pilgrims

At eight o'clock on the morning of July fourth we reached the *bury* called Mufallis and had our first experience of Turkish rule in Yemen. Unexpectedly we here stumbled upon a Turkish customhouse, which I had thought was located at Taiz, as the boundary of Turkish Yemen on my maps did not extend further south An unmannerly negro, calling himself Mudeer of Customs, looked out of a port-hole and demanded my ascent Through dirt and up darkness I reached his little room and stated my errand and purpose. No kind words or

<sup>1</sup> The Yemen plow is shaped like an English plow in many respects; although it has only one handle its coulter is broad and made of iron, a great improvement over the crooked stick of Mesopotamia

offered backsheesh would avail, "*all* the baggage must be opened and *all* books were forbidden entrance into Yemen by a recent order," so he affirmed. First, therefore, I unscrewed the covers of the two boxes with an old bowie-knife. The books, after having been critically examined by eyes that could not read, were seized; next my saddle-bags were searched, and every book and map was also confiscated. I was refused even a receipt for the books taken, and to every plea or question the only reply was, to go on to Taiz and appeal to the Governor.

Despoiled of our goods, we left the "customhouse" at eleven A. M., taking an old man on a donkey armed with a spear, as guide and defence, because Nasir heard that there was disturbance in this quarter. At two o'clock we rested for half an hour under the shade of a huge rock in the bed of the wady, and then warned by peals of thunder, we hastened on, hoping to reach Hirwa before dark. In less than an hour, however, the sky was black, rain fell in torrents, and we found it hopeless to attempt to urge the slow camels on through the wady. There was no shelter in sight, so we crouched under a small tree halfway up the mud bank. The rain turned to hail—large stones that frightened the camels so that they stampeded—and we became thoroughly chilled.

When the storm ceased, our donkey man came with looks of horror to tell us that his poor beast had fallen down the slope and was being swept away by the torrent! What had been a dry river bed half an hour before, was now a rushing rapids. We decided to climb up the terraces to a house which we saw on the mountain side. The camels had preceded us, and after a vigorous climb over mud-fields and up the rocks we reached the house and hospitality of Sheikh Ali. Over the charcoal fire, after drinking plenty of *kushr*, (made from the *shell* of the coffee bean,) we had to listen to a long discussion concerning the lost donkey. Finally, matters were smoothed over by my offering to pay one-half the price of the animal on condition that our guide should proceed with us to *Hirwa*.

The next day we were off early. Because of the steep ascents I was obliged to walk most of the way, and I sprained my ankle severely. It did not pain me until night, when it was swollen and kept me "on crutches" for several days. *Hirwa* is a small Arab village with a weekly market, and we found shelter in the usual coffee-shop characteristic of Yemen. The following day we reached *Sept Ez zeilah*, where we found cleaner quarters than the night before. At about midnight a war party of Bedouins came and frightened the peaceful villagers with demands for food, etc. They had just returned from setting fire to a small castle, and, numbering sixty hungry men, were not to be intimidated. They were about to force their way into our quarters when Nasir and the women promised to give them food. Within, I kept quiet and listened to the noise of grinding and baking and coffee-pounding. Without, some of the Arabs seized a cow belonging to a poor woman and butchered it for their feast. At this there was a crying of women and barking of dogs and swearing of oaths by the Great Allah, such as I hope never to hear again. Finally, the Arabs went away with full stomachs, and we slept a broken sleep for fear they might return. The next day we proceeded to Taiz, and arrived at noon, one week after leaving Aden.

The Mutasarrif Pasha, or Governor, was satisfied with my passports, and expressed his regrets that the books had been seized at Mufallis, but such was the law. He would, however, allow me to send for them for inspection. What is written here in four lines was the work and patience of four weary days! A soldier was sent to Mufallis, I was obliged to entrust him with money to pay the custom dues, to hire a camel to carry the books; finally to pay for two sticks of sealing wax (price in Taiz one rupee) with which to seal the books and maps lest they be tampered with—all this at the order of the enlightened government of the Sublime Porte! The first messenger never reached Mufallis; on the road he was attacked by Arabs, stabbed in the neck, robbed of his rifle, and carried

back to the military hospital at Taiz. Then there was more delay to find and send a second soldier with the same camel and money and sealing wax, but with a new rifle. He returned with the books safely after five days! No Turk could set a value on a book, and so the law is that books are taxed by weight, boxes included. The customs receipt was attached for "200 kilograms Jewish books (at twenty piastres a kilo), value, 4,000 piastres, and custom dues amounting to 288 piastres." In the same document I was spoken of as "the Jew, Ishmail, Dhaif Ullah,"—a rather curious combination of names. I was called a "Jew" because of the case of Hebrew New Testaments; Ishmail was the equivalent for Samuel, and Dhaif Ullah, my Arabic cognomen.

## VI

### YEMEN : THE SWITZERLAND OF ARABIA

"If the Turks would clear out of Yemen, a wonderful field for commerce would be thrown open, for the Turkish government is vile and all cultivators are taxed to an iniquitous extent."—*Jon Kerth Falconer*.

WHILE waiting at Taiz I had an opportunity to study Yemen town life and the system of government, as well as to learn a little about the cultivation of coffee and kaat, the two chief products of this part of Yemen

Taiz has not often been visited by travellers from the occident, and is a most interesting place. It is a large fortified village of perhaps 5,000 inhabitants, the residence of a Mutasarrif whose authority extends from the province of Hodeidah to the Aden frontier including Mocha and Sheikh Seyyid on the coast, recently abandoned by France. The place has five gates, one of which has been walled up, and five large mosques in Byzantine style. The largest Mosque is called El Muzafer, and has two large minarets and twelve beautiful domes. Taiz was once a centre of learning and its libraries were celebrated all over Arabia. Firozabadi, the Noah Webster of the Arabic language, taught in Taiz and edited his "Ocean" dictionary there. He died at the neighboring town of Zebid, in 1414 A. D., and his grave is honored by the learned of Yemen.

The bazaar is not large, but the four European shops kept by Greek merchants are well supplied with all ordinary articles of civilization. One public bath, in splendid condition, and a military hospital show Ottoman occupation. The fort holds perhaps 1,300 soldiers and the residence of the Mutasarrif is in a beautiful and comfortable little building outside of the town.

The mosques were once grand but are now ruined and a home for bats, the famous libraries have disappeared and the subterranean vaults of the largest Mosque formerly used as porticoes for pupils are now Turkish horse-stables. There is a post office and telegraph; the post goes once a week to Hodeidah via Zebid and Beit el Fakih, and the telegraph in the same direction a little more rapidly when the wires are in order.

Taiz is girt around by Jebel Sobr, the highest range of mountains in southern Yemen. Hissn Aroos peak, near the town, has an elevation of over 7,000 feet. According to Niebuhr and Deffler, on a clear day one can look from the summit of this peak across the lowlands and the Red Sea into Africa. I was unable to reach the summit as my Arab guide failed me and the days were misty and frequent rains fell.

Taiz is the centre of kaat-culture for all Yemen, and coffee comes here on its way to Hodeidah or Aden. Amid all the wealth of vegetation and fruitage every plant seems familiar to the tourist save kaat. It is a shrub whose very name is unknown outside of Yemen, while there it is known and used by every mother's son, as well as by the mothers and daughters themselves. Driving from Aden to Sheikh Othman, one first learns the *name*. Why are those red flags hoisted near the police stations, at intervals on the road, and why are they hauled down as soon as those camels pass? Oh, they are taking loads of kaat for the Aden market, and the flags are to prevent cheating of the customs. Over 2,000 camel loads come into Aden every year, and each load passes through English territory by "block-signal" system, for it is highly taxed. As to its *use*, step into a kahwah in any part of Yemen shortly before sunset, and you will see Arabs each with a bundle of green twigs in his lap, chewing at the leaves of kaat.

At Taiz I first had an opportunity to meet the Jews of the interior of Yemen. Altogether they number perhaps 60,000 in the whole province. They live mostly in the large towns and very few are agriculturists. They are a despised and down-trodden



race, but they say at Sana, that their condition is not so bad under the Turks as it was under the Arab rulers before 1871. The accounts of their origin are discrepant. Some say they are descended from the Jews of the Dispersion, but others hold that they were immigrants from the North over 900 years ago. They are more cleanly, more intelligent and more trustworthy than the Arabs, and although they are out of all communication with the rest of the world and in ignorance of their European countrymen they are not ignorant of Hebrew and rabbinic learning. Their synagogue near Taiz is a low stone building, twenty-five by fifteen feet. For furniture it has only a few curtains of embroidered texts, a printed diagram of the ancient candlestick, with the names of the twelve tribes, and a high reading-desk. Such are all the synagogues of Yemen.

At Taiz the Jews seemed to have grown content under long centuries of oppression and taxation. Many of the old Moslem laws against infidels, such as those forbidding them to *ride*, to carry weapons or wear fine clothes in public, are still rigorously enforced by custom if not by the government. The Jew is universally despised, yet he cannot be spared, for nearly all artisan work is in Jewish hands. The Moslem Arab has learned nothing from the Jew outside of the Koran; but, alas! the Jew has imbibed many foolish customs and superstitions foreign to his creed from Islam.

When the Hebrew Scriptures reached Taiz I was again disappointed, for the Governor would not permit the boxes to be opened, but they were to be sent sealed and under guard to Sana. I afterward learned that the "guard" was for me as well as the books, and that the soldier carried a letter with this accusation written: "This is a converted Jew, who is corrupting the religion of Islam, and sells books to Moslems and Jews." I had no alternative but to proceed to Sana; taking a Damar Arab as servant, having dismissed the Aden camels.

I left Taiz on a mule July 26th, and arrived at Seyanee the

same day. The following night we reached Ibb. Here I was forced to lodge outside of the town, as the guard had instructions not to let me "see things." I endured this impatiently, until I learned that our servant had been imprisoned on our arrival because he told me the names of the villages on the route! I then appealed to the Mayor, and on virtue of my passports demanded the right of going about the town and the release of my servant. After some delay, both requests were granted. The incident is one of many to show the suspicion with which a stranger is regarded by the authorities in Yemen. On Saturday the soldier and I hastened on to reach the large town of Yerim before Sunday, and rest there, waiting for the baggage camel. It was a long ride of twelve hours, but through a delightful country everywhere fertile and terraced with coffee plantations and groves of kaat.

Yerim, with perhaps 300 houses, lies in a hollow of the Sumara range of mountains. It has a fortress and some houses of imposing appearance, but the general aspect of the town is miserable. A neighboring marsh breeds malaria, and the place is proverbially unhealthy in this otherwise salubrious region. Niebuhr's botanist, Forskal, died here on their journey in 1763. The road from Ibb to Yerim has perhaps the finest scenery of any part of Yemen; never have I seen more picturesque mountains and valleys, green with verdure and bright with blossoms. Scabiosa, bluebells, forget-me-nots, golden-rod, four-o'clocks and large oleander-trees —

"All earth was full of heaven  
And every bush afire with God."

The cacti-plants were in full bloom, and measured twenty feet against the mountain passes. Two thousand feet below one could hear the sound of the water rushing along the wady-bed or disappearing under the bridges that span the valleys. While high above, the clouds were half concealing the summit of the "Gazelle Neck" (Unk el-Gazel).

Sunday, July 29th, was a cold day at Yerim, early in the morning the temperature went down to 52°, and at night two blankets were needed. Not until nine o'clock was it warm enough for the Yerim merchants to open their shops

A Jewish family, en route for Taiz, were stopping with us at the caravansari, and at night I spoke for over two hours with them and the Arabs about Christ. There was no interruption, and I was impressed to see the interest of a Jew and Arab alike in what I told them from Isaiah lvi., reading it in Arabic by the dim candle light, amidst all the baggage and beasts of an Oriental inn. At the little village of Khader, eight miles from Waalan, angry words arose from the "guard" because I tried to speak to a Jew. When I spoke in protest they began to strike the Jew with the butt end of their rifles,<sup>1</sup> and when the poor fellow fled, my best defence was silence. On my return journey, I inadvertently raised trouble again, by mentioning that Jesus Christ and Moses were *Jews*—which the Arabs considered an insult to the prophets of God.

On the road beyond Yerim we passed a large boulder with an irregular impression on one side. This is called Ali's footprint, and the Arabs who pass always anoint it with oil. The steep ascents and descents of the journey were now behind us. From Yerim on to Sana the plateau is more level. Wide fields of lentils, barley and wheat take the place of the groves of kaat and coffee; camels were used for ploughing, and with their long necks and curious harness, were an odd sight.

The next halt we made was at Damar, 8,000 feet above sea-level. It is a large town, with three minaret-mosques and a large bazaar; the houses are of native rock, three and four-stories high, remarkably clean and well-built. Inside they are whitewashed, and have the Yemen translucent slabs of gypsum

<sup>1</sup> It was not pleasant for an American to notice that nearly all the Turkish rifles in Yemen were "Springfield 1861." The same weapons that were employed to break the chains of slavery in the southern states, are now used to oppress the peaceful Yemenites.

for window-panes From Damar the road leads northeast over Maaber and the Kaiet en-Nekil pass to Waalan; thence, nearly due north, to Sana From Damar to Waalan is thirty-five miles, and thence to the capital, eighteen miles more The roads near the city of Sana are kept in good repair, although there are no wheeled vehicles, for the sake of the Turkish artillery.

On Thursday, August 2d, we entered Sana by the Yemen gate Three years before I had entered the city from the other side, coming from Hodeidah, then in the time of the Arab rebellion and now myself a prisoner I was taken to the Dowla and handed over to the care of a policeman until the Wali heard my case After finding an old Greek friend from Aden, who offered to go bail for me, I was allowed liberty, and for nineteen days was busy seeing the city and visiting the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

Sana, anciently called Uzal, and since many centuries the chief city of Yemen, contains some 50,000 inhabitants and lies stretched out in a wide, level valley between Jebel Nokoom and the neighboring ranges. It is 7,648 feet above sea-level. The town is in the form of a triangle, the eastern point consisting of a large fortress, dominating the town, and built upon the lowest spur of Nokoom. The town is divided into three walled quarters, the whole being surrounded by one continuous wall of stone and brick. They are respectively the city proper, in which are the government buildings, the huge bazaars, and the residences of the Arabs and Turks; the Jews' quarter; and Bir-el-azib, which lies between the two, and contains gardens and villas belonging to the richer Turks and Arabs. The city had once great wealth and prosperity, and to-day remains, next to Bagdad, the most flourishing city in all Arabia. The shops are well supplied with European goods, and a large

<sup>1</sup> Of the work among the latter, and my experiences in distributing the New Testament, a report was published by the Mildmay Mission, we therefore omit reference to it here.

manufacture of silk, jewelry and arms is carried on. The government quarter, with its cafés, billiard-rooms, large Greek shops, carriages, bootblacks, and brass-band reminds one of Cairo. Sana has forty-eight mosques, thirty-nine synagogues, twelve large public-baths, a military hospital with 200 beds, and is the centre of trade for all northern Yemen and northwestern Hadramaut, as well as for the distant villages of Nejran and fertile Wady Dauasir. Arabs from every district crowd the bazaars, and long strings of camels leave every day for the Hodeidah coast.

On August 14th I took an early morning walk to Rhoda, a village about eight miles north of Sana, and in the midst of beautiful gardens. From Roda the direct caravan route leads to Nejran, and from the outskirts of the village, looking north, an inviting picture met the eye. A fertile plateau stretched out to the horizon, and only two days' journey would bring one into the free desert beyond Turkish rule. But this time the way across the peninsula was closed by my bankruptcy; robbed at Yerim in the coffee-shop, and already in debt at Sana, it would have been impossible to proceed, except as a dishonest dervish.

On the 21st of August I left Sana for Hodeidah, receiving a loan of twenty dollars from the Ottoman government, to be paid back at the American consulate. We followed the regular postal route, the same which I had travelled on my first journey.

The plateau or table-land between Sana'a and Banân is a pasture country. The Bedouins live in the stone-built villages and herd their immense flocks on the plain; camels, cows and sheep were grazing by the hundreds and thousands. After Banân begins the difficult descent to the coast down break-neck mountain *stairways* rather than roadways, over broken bridges, and through natural arches. Fertile, cultivated mountain slopes were on every side, reminding one of the valleys of Switzerland. In one district near Suk-el-Khamis the whole mountain-side for a height of 6,000 feet was terraced from top to bottom. General Haig wrote of these terraces. "One can

hardly realize the enormous amount of labor, toil and perseverance which these represent. The terraced walls are usually from five to eight feet in height, but toward the top of the mountain they are sometimes as much as fifteen or eighteen feet. They are built entirely of rough stone, laid without mortar. I reckon on an average that each wall retains a terrace not more than twice its own height in width, and I do not think I saw a single breach in one of them unrepared."<sup>1</sup>

In Yemen there are two rainy seasons, in spring and in autumn, so that there is generally an abundance of water in the numerous reservoirs stored for irrigation. Yet, despite the extraordinary fertility of the soil and the surprising industry of the inhabitants, the bulk of the people are miserably poor, ill-fed and rudely clothed, because they are crushed down by a heartless system of taxation. Every agricultural product, implement and process is under the heavy hand of an oppressive administration and a military occupation that knows no law. The peasantry are robbed by the soldiers on their way to market, by the custom-collector at the gate of each city, and by the tax-gatherer in addition. On the way to Sana my soldier-companion stopped a poor peasant who was urging on a little donkey loaded with two large baskets of grapes, he emptied the best of the grapes into his saddle-bags, and then beat the man and cursed him because some of the grapes were unripe.<sup>1</sup> No wonder we read of rebellions in Yemen, and no wonder that intense hatred lives in every Arab against the very name of Turk.

From Suk-el-Khamis, a dirty mountain village,<sup>2</sup> with an elevation of over 9,500 feet, the road leads by Mefak and Wady Zaun to the peculiarly located village of Menakha. At an altitude of 7,600 feet above sea-level, it is perched on a narrow ridge between two mountain ranges. On either side of the one

<sup>1</sup> Geog. Soc. Proceedings, 1887, p. 482.

<sup>2</sup> Deffler says in his diary that this place has "une odeur atroce et des legions de puces et de punaises." I also had an all-night's battle.

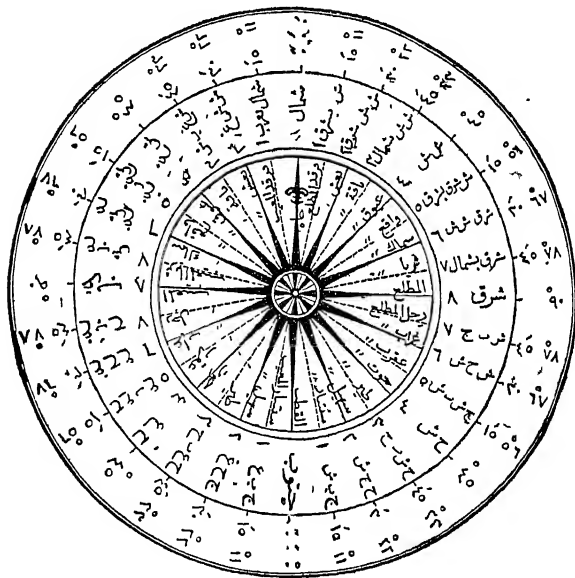
street that forms the backbone of the summit are precipices 2,000 feet deep. So narrow is the town that there are places where one can stand and gaze down both sides of the abyss at the same time. To reach it from the west there is only one path zigzagging up the mountain-side, and from the east it can only be approached by a narrow track cut in the face of the precipice and winding up for an ascent of 2,500 feet. Menakha is the centre of the coffee trade; it has a population of 10,000 or more, one-third of which are Jews. There are four Greek merchants, the Turks had 2,000 troops garrisoned in the town, and the bazaars were equal to those of Taiz. Its exact elevation is given by Defler, after eighteen observations, as 7,616 feet above sea-level.

From Menakha to the coast is only two long days' journey; three by camel. The first stage is to Hejjeila, at the foot of the high ranges, thence to Bajil, a village of 2,000 people, and along the barren, hot plain to Hodeidah. At Bajil the people are nearly all shepherds, and the main industry is dyeing cloth and weaving straw. Here one sees the curious Yemen straw hats worn by the women, and here also the peasant-maidens wear no veils. Yet they are of purer heart and life than the black-clouted and covered women of the Turkish towns.

Hodeidah by the sea is very like Jiddah in its general appearance. The streets are narrow, crooked and indescribably filthy. The "Casino" is a sort of Greek hotel for strangers, and the finest house in the city is that of Sidi Aaron, near the sea, with its fine front and marble courtyard. The population is of a very mixed character; east of the city in a separate quarter live the *Akhdam* Arabs, whose origin is uncertain, but who are considered outcasts by all the other Arabs. They are not allowed to carry arms and no Arab tribe intermarries with them.

From Hodeidah there is a regular line of small steamers to Aden, and the Egyptian Red Sea coasting steamers also call

here fortnightly The trade of Hodeidah was once flourishing, but here too Turkish misrule has brought deadness and dullness into business, and taxation has crushed industrial enterprise.



AN ARABIAN COMPASS.



## VII

### THE UNEXPLORED REGIONS OF HADRAMAUT

“As when to them who sail  
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
Mozambic, off at sea northeast winds blow  
Sabeian odors from the spicy shore  
Of *Araby* the blest.”—*Milton*.

WE must take at least a glimpse of the almost unknown region called Hadramaut.<sup>1</sup> This is a strip of territory stretching between the great desert and the sea from Aden eastward to Oman. Our knowledge of the interior of this region was almost a perfect blank until some light was thrown on it by the enterprising traveller A. Von Wrede in 1843. The coast is comparatively well known, at least as far as Makalla and Shehr. The land rises from the coast in a series of terraces to Jebel Hamra (5,284 feet), which is connected on the northeast with Jebel Dahura, over 8,000 feet high.

Adolph Von Wrede sailed from Aden to Makalla and thence penetrated inland as far as Wady Doan the most fertile spot of all South Arabia. This wady flows northward through the land of the Bni Yssa and the district is bordered on the west by Belad-el-Hasan and on the east by Belad-el-Hamum. But how far this region extends northward and whether the sandy desert of El Ahkaf (quicksands) really begins with the Wady Rakhia, a branch of the Doan are points on which Von Wrede throws no light and which are still uncertain. In 1870

<sup>1</sup> Hadramaut is a very ancient name for this region. Not only does Ptolemy place here the *Adramutæ* in his geography, but there seems little doubt that Hadramaut is identical with Hazarmaveth, mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis.

the French Jew, Joseph Halévy, made a bold attempt to penetrate into Hadramaut from Yemen. Since then little was added to our knowledge of Hadramaut until 1893 when Shibam, the residence of the most powerful Sultan of Hadramaut was visited by Theodore Bent and his wife. In 1897 they made a second journey into the same region which cost Mr. Bent his health and afterward his life. From the account of these journeys we quote a few paragraphs which set forth clearly the interesting character of this almost unknown country <sup>1</sup>

"Immediately behind Makalla rise grim arid mountains of a reddish hue, and the town is plastered against this rich-tinged background. By the shore, like a lighthouse, stands the white minaret of the Mosque, the walls and pinnacles of which are covered with dense masses of seabirds and pigeons, not far from this the huge palace where the Sultan dwells reminds one of a whitewashed mill with a lace-like parapet, white, red and brown are the dominant colors of the town, and in the harbor the Arab dhows with fantastic sterns rock to and fro in the unsteady sea, forming altogether a picturesque and unusual scene.

"Nominally Makalla is ruled over by a Sultan of the Al Kaiti family, whose connection with India has made them very English in their sympathies, and his Majesty's general appearance, with his velvet coat and jewelled daggers, is far more Indian than Arabian. Really the most influential people in the town are the money-grubbing Parsees from Bombay, and it is essentially one of those commercial centres where Hindustani is spoken nearly as much as Arabian. We were lodged in a so-called palace hard by the bazaar, which reeked with mysterious smells and was alive with flies; so we worked hard to get our preparations made and to make our sojourn in this uncongenial burning spot as short as possible. . . .

<sup>1</sup>"The Hadramaut: a Journey" by Theodore Bent. *Nineteenth Century*, September, 1894. Also Mrs Bent's "Yafei and Fadhli countries." *Geographical Journal*, July, 1898.

“Leaving these villages behind us, we climbed rapidly higher and higher, until, at an elevation of over 5,000 feet, we found ourselves at last on a broad level plateau, stretching as far as the eye could reach in every direction, and shutting off the Hadramaut from the coast. This is the ‘mons excelsus’ of Pliny, here we have the vast area where once flourished the frankincense and the myrrh. Of the latter shrub there is plenty left, and it is still tapped for its odoriferous sap; but of the former we only saw one specimen on the plateau, for in the lapse of ages the wealth of this country has steadily disappeared, further east, however, in the Mahra country, there is, I understand, a considerable quantity left

“Near Hajarein are many traces of the olden days when the frankincense trade flourished, and when the town of Doan, which name is still retained in the Wady Doan, was a great emporium for this trade. Acres and acres of ruins, dating from the centuries immediately before our era, lie stretched along the valley here, just showing their heads above the weight of superincumbent sand which has invaded and overwhelmed the past glories of this district. The ground lies strewn with fragments of Himyaritic inscriptions, pottery, and other indications of a rich harvest for the excavator, but the hostility of the Nahad tribe prevented us from paying these ruins more than a cursory visit, and even to secure this we had to pay the Sheikh of the place nineteen dollars; and his greeting was ominous as he angrily muttered, ‘Salaam to all who believe Mohammed is the true prophet.’

“At Assab they would not allow us to dip our vessels in their well, nor take our repast under the shadow of their Mosque. even the women of this village ventured to insult us, peeping into our tent at night, and tumbling over the guys in a manner most aggravating to the weary occupants

“Our troubles on this score were happily terminated at Haura, where a huge castle belonging to the Al Kaiti family dominates a humble village surrounded by palm groves. With-

out photographs to bear out my statement, I should hardly dare to describe the magnificence of these castles in the Hadramaut. That at Haura is seven stories high, and covers fully an acre of ground beneath the beetling cliff, with battlements, towers, and machicolations bearing a striking likeness to Holyrood. But Holyrood is built of stone, and Haura, save for the first story, is built of sun-dried bricks; and if Haura stood where Holyrood does, or in any other country save dry, arid Arabia, it would long ago have melted away. . . .

“One of the most striking features of these Arabian palaces is the wood-carving. The doors are exquisitely decorated with intricate patterns, and with a text out of the Koran carved on the lintel; the locks and keys are all of wood, and form a study for the carver’s art, as do the cupboards, the niches, the supporting beams and the windows, which are adorned with fret-work instead of glass. The dwelling-rooms are above, the ground floor being exclusively used for merchandise, and the first floor for the domestics.”

Concerning the chief town of the interior of Hadramaut Mr. Bent writes as follows:

“Then he sent us to reside for five more days in his capital of Shibam, which is twelve miles distant from Al Katan, and is one of the principal towns in the Hadramaut valley. It is built on rising ground in the centre of the narrowest point of the valley, so that no one can pass between it and the cliffs of the valley out of gunshot of the walls. This rising ground has doubtless been produced by many generations of towns built of sun-dried bricks, for it is the best strategical point in the neighborhood. Early Arab writers tell us that the Himyarite population of this district came here when they abandoned their capital at Sabota, or Shabwa, further up the valley, early in our era, but we found evident traces of an earlier occupation than this—an inscription and a seal with the name ‘Shibam’ engraved on it, which cannot be later than the third century, B. C. And as a point for making up the caravans which started

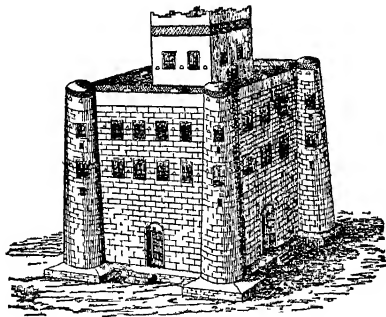
from the frankincense-growing district, Shibam must always have been very important.

“The town of Shibam offers a curious appearance as you approach ; above its mud-brick walls with bastions and watch towers appear the tall whitewashed houses of the wealthy, which make it look like a large round cake with sugar on it. Outside the walls several industries are carried on, the chief of which is the manufacture of indigo dye. The small leaves are dried in the sun and powdered and then put into huge jars—which reminded us of the Forty Thieves—filled with water. Next morning these are stirred with long poles, producing a dark blue frothy mixture ; this is left to settle, and then the indigo is taken from the bottom and spread out on cloths to drain ; the substance thus procured is taken home and mixed with dates and saltpetre. Four pounds of this indigo to a gallon of water makes the requisite and universally used dye for garments, the better class of which are calendered by beating them with wooden hammers on stones.”

Of the coast town of Shehr and its ruler Mr. Bent says :

“Shehr is a detestable place by the sea, set in a wilderness of sand. Once it was the chief commercial port of the Hadramaut valley, but now Makalla has quite superseded it, for Shehr is nothing but an open roadstead and its buildings are now falling into ruins. Ghalib, the eldest son and heir of the chief of the Al Kaiti family, rules here as the viceregent of his father, who is in India as jemadar or general of the Arab troops, chiefly all Hadrami, in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Ghalib is quite an Oriental dandy, who lived a life of some rapidity when in India, so that his father thought it as well to send him to rule in Shehr, where the capabilities for mischief are not so many as at Bombay. He dresses very well in various damask silk coats and faultless trousers, his swords and daggers sparkle with jewels, in his hand he flourishes a golden-headed cane, and, as the water is hard at Shehr, he sends his dirty linen in dhows to Bombay to be washed.”

The Arabs of Hadramaut have been still more in contact with Java than with India. Large colonies of Hadramis emigrated to the Dutch Archipelago more than a century ago; intermarriage between the Javanese and the Arabs is very common, and the Mohammedanism of the Dutch East Indies is entirely of the Hadramaut type. These interesting facts were first brought to light by Van den Berg, a Dutch scholar in his elaborate work on this province of Arabia and the Arab colonies in Java<sup>1</sup>. His account of Hadramaut is a compilation from the lips of the Arab immigrants, but the description of the manners and customs of the people and their religious peculiarities is from personal observation. Altogether, in spite of minor geographical inaccuracies, the book is the best single volume on Southern Arabia and tells the story of Islam in the Dutch Archipelago as it is to-day. The Arabs have always been a strong race at colonizing but it is well to note that the influence of Hadramaut on Java and Sumatra to-day is not less than that of Oman on Zanzibar and East Africa in the last century. Even Hadramaut will not always remain undiscovered and unremembered. The incense-country of antiquity has a future before it even as it has had a glorious past.



A CASTLE IN HADRAMAUT.

<sup>1</sup> *Le Hadramont et les Colonies Arabes dans le Archipel Indien* par L. W. C. Van den Berg. Batavia, 1886. By order of the Government.

## VIII

### MUSCAT AND THE COASTLANDS OF OMAN

“Oman is separated from the rest of Arabia by a sandy desert. It is, in fact, as far as communication with the rest of the world is concerned, an island with the sea on one side and the desert on the other. Hence its people are even more primitive, simple and unchanged in their habits than the Arabs generally. Along the coast, however, especially at Muscat they are more in contact with the outer world”—*General Haig*.

IN Arab nomenclature Oman applies only to a small district in the vicinity of Muscat, but the name is generally given to the entire southeastern section of the Arabian peninsula, including everything east of a line drawn from the Kuria-Muria islands to the peninsula of Katar, anciently called Bahrein. Thus defined it is the largest province of Arabia and in some respects the most interesting. Historically, politically and geographically Oman has always been isolated from the other provinces. Turkish rule never extended this far nor did the later caliphs long exercise their authority here. The whole country has for centuries been under independent rulers called Imams or Seyyids. The population, which is wholly Arab and Mohammedan, (save in the coast towns) was derived originally from two different stocks known to the Arabs as Kahtani and Adnani or the Yemeni and Muadi. These names have changed since the beginning of the eighteenth century to Hinani and Ghaffiri. The Yemen tribes came first and are most numerous. The two rival races have been in open and continuous feud and antagonism and have kept the country in perpetual turmoil. They even inhabit separate quarters in some of the towns, according to Colonel Miles. In Somail, about fifty miles inland from Muscat a broad road marks the division between the two clans. These two parent stocks are

subdivided into some 200 different tribes and these again into sub-tribes or "houses" Each family-group has its own Sheikh, a hereditary position assumed by the eldest male in the family

Very few of the tribes of Oman are nomadic; the greater part live in towns and villages along the wady-beds. With the exception of fruits of which there is a great variety and abundance, dates are the sole food product and the chief export of the province. Rice is imported from India. The total population of Oman is estimated by Colonel Miles not to exceed 1,500,000. There are numerous towns of 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants; Muscat and Mattra are the chief towns on the coast, and are practically united as they are only two miles apart. The climate of Oman on the coast is excessively hot and moist during a large part of the year, although the rainfall here is only six to ten inches annually, in the interior the heat is greatly tempered by the elevation, the rainfall is much greater and the climate as pleasant as in the highlands of Yemen.

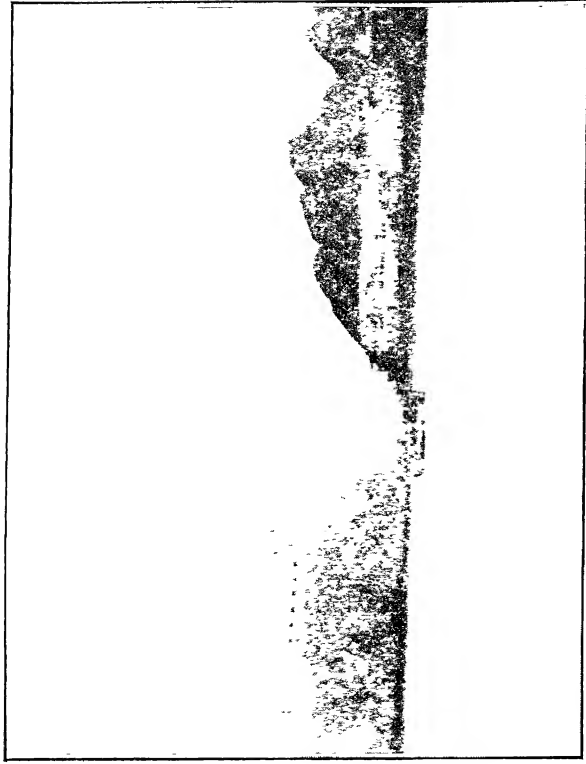
The Omanese state was at its greatest height of power at the beginning of the present century. Then the Sultans of Muscat exercised rule as far as Bahrein to the northwest, had possession of Bunder Abbas and Linga in Persia, and called Socotra and Zanzibar their own. At this time the Oman Arabs began their extensive journeys in Africa and, urged by the enormous profits of the slave-trade, explored every corner of the great interior of the Dark Continent. At present the authority of the Sultan at Muscat, Seyyid Feysul bin Turki, does not extend far beyond the capital and its suburbs.

In the early years of the Oman Sultanate, Nizwa was the capital, afterward Rastak became the seat of government, but since 1779, Muscat has been at once the capital and the key, the gateway and the citadel of the whole country. On approaching Muscat in a British India steamer, the land is first sighted, looming up in one mass of dark mountain ranges;



closer, one portion of this mass directly over the town of Muscat is seen to be of a dark brown color, crag on crag, serrated and torn in a fantastic manner and giving the harbor a most picturesque appearance. The town itself shows white against the dark massive rocks, on the summits of which are perched numerous castles and towers. But, though presenting a pleasing prospect from a distance, a nearer view reveals the usual features of large Oriental towns,—narrow, dirty streets, unattractive buildings, and masses of crumbling walls under the torrid heat of a burning sun and amid all the sweltering surroundings of a damp climate.

The heat of Muscat is proverbial. John Struys, the Dutchman, who visited this town in 1672, wrote that it was "so incredibly hot and scorching that strangers are as if they were in boiling cauldrons or sweating tubs." A Persian, named Abder-Razak, being a Persian, was able to surpass all others in exaggerated description and wrote of Muscat in 1442, "The heat was so intense that it burned the marrow in the bones, the sword in its scabbard melted like wax, and the gems that adorned the handle of the dagger were reduced to coal. In the plains the chase became a matter of perfect ease, for the desert was filled with roasted gazelles!" It is said that a black bulb thermometer has registered 189° F. in the sun at Muscat and 107° even at night, is not unusual during the hottest part of the year. The bare rocks form a parabolic mirror to the sun's rays from the south and west; add to this the facts that the hills shut off the breezes and that Muscat lies on the Tropic of Cancer in the zone of greatest heat. According to the witness of a resident, "the climate of Muscat is bad beyond all description. For about three months in the year, from December to March, it is tolerably cool at night but after the latter month the heat becomes intense and makes Muscat rank but little after the Infernal Regions. There is a short break in the hot weather about the middle of July which generally lasts a month."



THE HARBOR AND CASTLE AT NUSCAT



READY FOR A CAMEL RIDE IN THE DESERT



The most conspicuous buildings of Muscat are the two forts, the relics of the Portuguese dominion, which stand out boldly on each side of the town about 100 feet above the sea. They command not only the sea-approach, but the town itself and are only accessible by a fine stairway cut out of the natural rock. The guns that bristle from the forts are nearly all old and comparatively harmless. Several of them are of brass and bear the royal arms of Spain, one is dated 1606. In the fort to the right of the harbor, one can still see the ruins of a Portuguese chapel. When Pelly visited it in 1865 the following inscription was legible.

AVE MAR. GRASA P. EA □s TECUM Etc. . . .

Its translation given by him reads: "Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Don Phillip III, King of Spain, Don Juan de Acuna of his council of war and his captain-general of the artillery in the year 1605, in the eighth year of his reign in the crown of Portugal, ordered through Don Quarte Menezes, his commissioner of India, that this fortress should be built."

The Sultan has also a town residence in half decay like all the other stone-built but mud-cemented houses of the natives. The only residences well-built and durable are those of the British resident and the American consul. The former occupies the choice location, in a rock cleft, where breezes blow from two directions. The bazaar of Muscat has little to boast of, one of the chief industries is the manufacture of *Hilawi* or Muscat candy-paste, which to the acquired taste is delicious, but to the stranger smells of rancid butter and tastes like sweet wagon-grease.

The town is cut off from the plain behind by a substantially built wall which stretches from hill to hill. This wall is pierced with two gates which are always guarded and closed a couple of hours after sunset. The moat outside the wall is dry. Beyond it are houses and hundreds of mat huts princi-

pally inhabited by Beluchis and Negroes. The American mission house is also outside of the wall, in this quarter. About a third of a mile beyond are the gardens of Muscat and the wells, protected by a tower and guard. "The gardens" are always visited at sunset by the strollers for exercise, but they are hardly large enough "to supply a week's food for 100 self-respecting locusts of normal appetite."

The population of Muscat is of very mixed character, Arabs, Beluchis, Banian-Traders, Negroes, Persians, and every other nation that frequents this port of transit. The Arabic spoken in all Oman is a dialect quite different from that of Nejd or Yemen but the Arabic of Muscat is full of pigeon-English and pigeon-Hindustani. The extensive and long intercourse with Zanzibar and East Africa has also had its influence on the speech and habits of the Muscat Arab trader. The present trade is still very considerable, although less than a century ago. It is mostly with India, there being little direct trade with England. The chief exports are dates, fruit, shark-fins, fish, and salt; the imports, rice, sugar, piece-goods, coffee, silk, petroleum and arms. The largest export is of dates which nearly all go to the American Market. Besides the large number of steamers which call at this port, the native merchants own several old British sailing vessels, some of them noted clippers in their day, which make one or two voyages a year and bring profit to their owners. Native boats also transport cargoes landed at Muscat, to the less frequented ports. This adds to the importance of Muscat as an *entrepôt* for Oman. Mattra is the terminus of the caravan-routes from the interior and is in communication with Muscat by a narrow mountain path and by sea.

The so-called Pirate coast stretches along the northern boundary of Oman on the Persian Gulf from El Katar to Ras Musendum and was, even as early as Ptolemy's day, inhabited by wild, lawless Arabs. On his map of Arabia they are named *Ichthiophagoi*, or fish-eaters. Niebuhr wrote of this

part of Oman, "Fishes are so plentiful upon the coast and so easily caught, as to be used not only for feeding cows, asses, and other domestic animals, but even as manure for the fields." Sir John Malcolm, in his quaint sketches of Persia wrote forty years ago: "I asked who were the inhabitants of the barren shore of Arabia that we saw. He answered with apparent alarm, 'they are of the sect of Wahabees and are called Jowasimee. But God preserve us from them, for they are monsters. Their occupation is piracy, and their delight murder, and to make it worse they give you the most pious reasons for every villainy they commit. They abide by the letter of the sacred volume, rejecting all commentaries and traditions. If you are their captive and offer all to save your life they say, No! It is written in the Koran that it is not lawful to plunder the living, but we are not prohibited from stripping the dead—so saying they knock you on the head.'"

Thanks to English commerce and gunboats these fanatic Wahabis have become more tame, and most of them have long given up piracy and turned to pearl-diving for a livelihood. Hindu traders have settled among them, foreign commerce reaches their bazaars, and the black tent is making room for the three or four important towns of Dabai, Sharka, Abu Thubi and Ras-el-Kheima, with growing population and increasing wealth.

The cape of Musendum and the land back of it, called Ras-el-Jebel is very mountainous, but beyond Ras-el-Kheima, the coast is low and flat all the way up the gulf. The villages are all built near the entrance of salt-water creeks or marshes, which serve as harbors at high-tide. For the most part the coast is unfertile, but near Sharka there are palm-groves, and further inland are oases. The islands off this coast are most of them uninhabited.

The Batina coast is the exception to all the maritime plains that surround so large a part of the peninsula; in western and eastern Arabia these low sandy plains are nearly barren of all

vegetation, but here extensive date plantations and gardens extend almost to the very ocean beach. Back of the rising plain are the lofty ranges of Jebel Akhdar. This fertile coast begins at Sib, about twenty-five miles from Muscat, and extends for 150 miles to the neighborhood of Khoi Kalba with an average width of about twelve miles. It has many towns and villages, the principal ones are the following. Sib is a scattered town chiefly built of mat-huts with two small detached forts. It has a very small bazaar, but extensive date-groves and gardens. Back of Sib on the way up the coast one sees the great bluff of Jebel Akhdar, 9,900 feet high, and visible over 100 miles out at sea. Barka has a lofty Aiab fortress, but for the rest mat huts among date-plantations characterize its general appearance. Large quantities of shell fish are collected and sent inland; the bazaar is good and some Banian traders are settled here. Passing several islands the next town is Suaik. After it the larger town of Sohar, with perhaps 4,000 people. This town is walled with a high fort in the middle, the residence of the Sheikh. A high conical peak, of light color, rises conspicuously about twelve miles west of the town, and with the surrounding date gardens and other trees makes a pretty picture, altogether more green than one would expect on Arabian coasts. Beyond Sohar the chief villages are, in order, Shinas, Al Fujaira, Dibba. The two latter are already beyond the Batina and are between the high cliffs and the deep sea.

Going from southeast Muscat down the coast toward Ras-el-Had we first pass the little village of Sudab and Bunder Jissa. The latter is of interest as the place the French were trying to acquire for a coaling-station from the Sultan of Muscat last year. It has a good anchorage, is only five miles from Muscat, and an island precipice, 140 feet high, guards the entrance. After this, Kariyat, Taiwa, Kalhat and smaller villages passed, we reach Sur. This large, double town is situated on a khor or backwater, with two forts to the westward. The in-

habitants, numbering perhaps 8,000, consist of two clans of the Bni Bu Ali and the Bni Janaba, often at feud with each other. The country inland is partly cultivated and date groves abound. Sur has always been a place of trade and enterprise and its buggalows visit India, Zanzibar and the Persian Gulf. The people are all bold sailors since many generations. But Sur also has the unenviable reputation of being even now the centre of illicit slave-trading. Beyond Sur is the headland of Jebel Saffan and Ras-el-Had, the easternmost point of Arabia, almost reaching the sixtieth degree of longitude.

For a knowledge of the coast beyond Ras-el-Had we are indebted to the papers of Assistant Surgeon H. J. Carter in the journal of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.<sup>1</sup> The two great Arab tribes that dwell on this coast are the Mahrah and the Gharah; the former really belong to Hadramaut, but the boundaries drawn on the maps are purely artificial and have no significance. Neither tribe is dependent on the Oman Sultan or acknowledges any allegiance to him. The Mahrah are descended from the ancient Himyarites and occupy a coast-line of nearly 140 miles from Saihut to Ras Morbat; their chief town is Damkut (Dunkot) on Kamar bay. In stature the Mahrahs are smaller than most Arabs, and by no means handsome, in their peculiar mode of Bedouin salutation they put their noses side by side and breathe softly. They subsist by fishing and are miserably poor; their plains, mountains and valleys, except close to Damkut, are sandy and barren. Religion they have scarcely any, and Carter says that they do not even know the Moslem prayers, and are utterly ignorant of the teachings of Mohammed. Their dialect is soft and sweet, and they themselves compare it to the language of the birds; it is evidently a corrupted form of the ancient

<sup>1</sup> Notes on the Mahrah Tribe with vocabulary of their language, notes on the Gharah tribe; geography of the southeast coast of Arabia;—July, 1845, July, 1847; and January, 1851, in the journal of the Society

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Himyaric and therefore of great importance in the study of philology.<sup>1</sup>

The Gharah tribe inhabit the coast between Moseirah island and the Kuria-Muria islands. Their country is mountainous and cavernous and consists of a white stratified limestone formation 4,000 or 5,000 feet above the sea-level. The upper part of the mountains are covered with good pasturage and their slopes with a dense thicket of small trees among which frankincense and other gum trees are plentiful. The whole tribe are *troglydites*, "cave-dwellers," since nature gives them better dwellings than the best mud-hut, and cooler than the largest tent of Kedar. They are largely nomadic, however, and shift from cave to cave in their wanderings. Their wardrobe is not an incumbrance as it consists of a single piece of coarse blue cotton wrapped around the loins like a short kilt. The women wear a loose flock of the same texture and color with wide sleeves, reaching a little below the knee in front and trailing on the ground behind, the veil is unknown. Children go about entirely naked. Both men and women tattoo their cheeks. For weapons they have swords, spears, daggers, and matchlocks. Their food consists of milk, flesh and honey with the wild fruits of the mountains.

This entire region has been justly celebrated for honey since the days of the Greek geographers who enumerate honey and frankincense as its chief products. The wild honey of South Arabia collected from the rocks and packed in large dry gourds, is fit for an epicure. On Ptolemy's map of Arabia the region inland from this coast is called *Libanotopheros Regio*, the place of incense; and by Pliny is termed *regio thurifera*, the region of frankincense. From the earliest times this has been the country that produces real frankincense in abundance. Once its export was a source of wealth to the inhabitants, for incense was used in the temples of Egypt and India as well as by the

<sup>1</sup> The most characteristic difference between Mahri and Arabic is the substitution of *Shin* (sh) for *Kaf* (k) in many words.

Jews, and by all the nations of antiquity. So important was this commerce in the early history of the world that Sprenger devotes several pages in his *Ancient Geography of Arabia* to describing the origin, extent, and influence of frankincense on civilization. The Arabs were then the general transport agents between the east and the west, *i. e.*, India and Egypt. The Queen of Sheba's empire grew rich in frankincense-trade, she brought to Solomon "spices in abundance," nor was there "any such spice" or brought in "such abundance" as that which Queen Sheba gave to Solomon. (B. C. cir. 992.)

The rise of Islam, the overthrow of the old Himyarite kingdom, the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, all these coöperated to destroy the ancient importance and prosperity of Southern Arabia. At present, frankincense is still exported, but not in large quantities. The gum is procured by making incisions in the bark of the shrub in May and December. On its first appearance it comes forth white as milk, but soon hardens and discolors. It is then collected by men and boys, employed to look after the trees by the different families who own the land on which they grow.



A BRANCH OF THE INCENSE TREE.

## IX

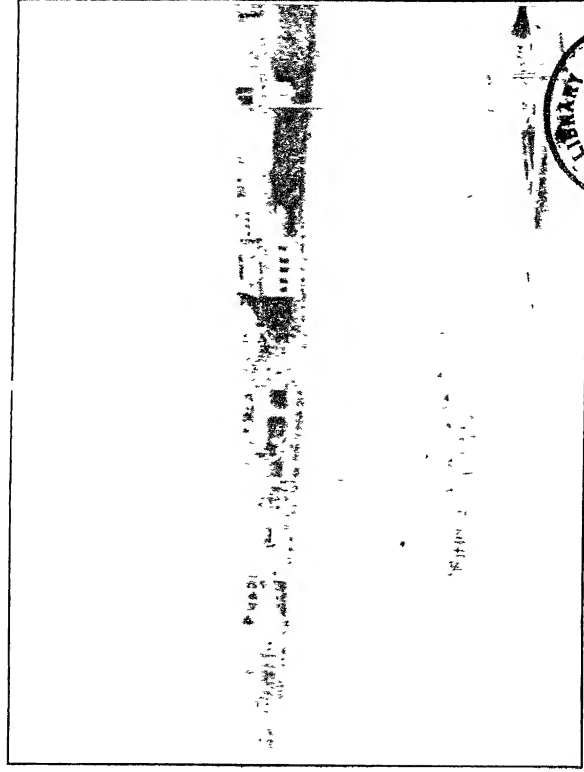
### THE LAND OF THE CAMEL

"To see real live dromedaries my readers must, I fear, come to Arabia, for these animals are not often to be met with elsewhere, not even in Syria; and whoever wishes to contemplate the species in all its beauty, must prolong his journey to Oman, which is for dromedaries, what Nejd is for horses, Cashmere for sheep, and Tibet for bulldogs."—*Palgrave*

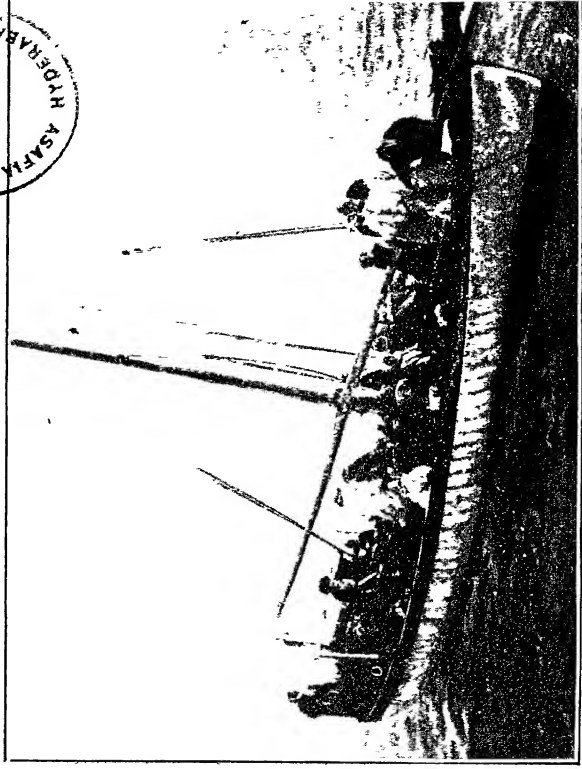
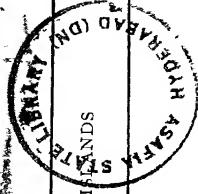
ALL Oman, but especially the region just described, is called among the Arabs *Um-el-ibl*, "mother of the camel." Palgrave, Doughty and other Arabian travellers agree that the Oman dromedary is the prince of all camel-breeds, and Doughty says they are so highly esteemed at Mecca as to fetch three times the price of other camels.

Unless one knows something about the camel one can neither understand the Arab nor his language; without the camel, life in a large part of Arabia would at present be impossible; without the camel the Arabic language would be vastly different. According to Hammer Purgstall, the Arabic dictionaries give this animal 5,744 different names; there is not a page in the lexicon but has some reference to the camel.

The Arabs highly value the camel, but do not admire its form and shape. There is an Arab tradition, cited in Burton's "Gold Mines of Midian," to the effect that when Allah determined to create the horse, He called the South Wind and said, "I desire to draw from thee a new being, condense thyself by parting with thy fluidity." The Creator then took a handful of this element, blew upon it the breath of life, and the noble quadruped appeared. But the horse complained against his Maker. His neck was too short to reach the distant grass blades on the march; his back had no hump to steady a saddle; his hoofs were sharp and sank deep into the sand; and



THE VILLAGE OF MENAMAH, BAHREIN ISLANDS



A BAHREIN HARBOR BOAT



he added many similar grievances Whereupon Allah created the camel to prove the foolishness of his complaint. The horse shuddered at the sight of what he wanted to become, and this is the reason every horse starts when meeting its caricature for the first time. The camel may not be beautiful, (although the Arabic lexicon shows that the words for "*pretty*" and "*camel*" are related) but he is surpassingly useful.

This animal is found in Persia, Asia Minor, Afghanistan, Beluchistan, Mongolia, Western China, Northern India, Syria, Turkey, North Africa and parts of Spain, but nowhere so generally or so finely developed as in Arabia. The two main species, not to speak of varieties, are the Southern, Arabian one-humped camel and the Northern, Bactrian two-humped camel. Each is specially adapted to its locality. The Bactrian camel is long-haired, tolerant of the intense cold of the steppes and is said to eat snow when thirsty. The Arabian species is short-haired, intolerant of cold, but able to endure thirst and extreme heat. It is incredible to Arabs that any camel-kind should have a double hump. A camel differs from a dromedary in nothing save blood and breed. The camel is a pack-horse; the dromedary a race-horse. The camel is thick-built, heavy-footed, ungainly, jolting; the dromedary has finer hair, lighter step, is easy of pace and more enduring of thirst. A caravan of camels is a freight-train; a company of Oman *thelul*-riders is a limited express. The ordinary caravan travels six hours a day and three miles an hour, but a good dromedary can run seventy miles a day on the stretch. A tradesman from Aneyza told Doughty that he had ridden from El Kasim to Taif and back, a distance of over 700 miles, in fifteen days! Mehsan Allayda once mounted his dromedary after the Friday midday prayer at El-Aly and prayed the next Friday in the great Mosque at Damascus about 440 miles distant. The Haj-road post-rider at Ma'an can deliver a message at Damascus, it is said, at the end of three days; the distance is over 200 miles.

The Arabs have a saying that "the camel is the greatest of all blessings given by Allah to mankind." One is not surprised that the meditative youth of Mecca who led the camels of Khadīyah, to Syria and back by the desert way, should appeal to the unbelievers in Allah and His prophet in the words, "*And do ye not look then at the camel how she is created?*" (Surah lxxxviii. 17 of the Koran)

To describe the camel is to describe God's goodness to the desert-dwellers. Everything about the animal shows evident design. His long neck, gives wide range of vision in desert marches and enables him to reach far to the meagre desert shrubs on either side of his pathway. The cartilaginous texture of his mouth, enables him to eat hard and thorny plants—the pasture of the desert. His ears are very small, and his nostrils large for breathing, but are specially capable of closure by valve-like folds against the fearful Simoon. His eyes are prominent, but protected by a heavy overhanging upper-lid, limiting vision upward thus guarding from the direct rays of the noon sun. His cushioned feet are peculiarly adapted for ease of the rider and the animal alike. Five horny pads are given him to rest on when kneeling to receive a burden or for repose on the hot sand. His hump is not a fictional but a *real* and acknowledged reserve store of nutriment as well as nature's packsaddle for the commerce of ages. His water reservoirs in connection with the stomach, enable him when in good condition to travel for five days without water. Again, the camel alone of all ruminants has incisor-teeth in the upper jaw, which, with the peculiar structure of his other teeth, make his bite, the animal's first and main defence, most formidable. The skeleton of the camel is full of proofs of design. Notice, for example, the arched backbone constructed in such a way as to sustain the greatest weight in proportion to the span of the supports; a strong camel can bear 1,000 pounds' weight, although the usual load in Oman is not more than 600 pounds.

The camel is a *domestic* animal in the full sense of the word,

for the Arabian domicile is indebted to the camel for nearly all it holds. All that can be obtained from the animal is of value. Fuel, milk, excellent hair for tents, ropes, shawls and coarser fabrics are obtained from the living animal; and flesh-food, leather, bones and other useful substances from the dead. Even the footprints of the camel though soon obliterated, are of special value in the desert. A lighter or smaller foot would leave no tracks, but the camel's foot leaves data for the Bedouin science of *Athar*—the art of navigation for the ship of the desert. Camel tracks are gossip and science, history and philosophy to the Arab caravan. A camel-march is the standard measure of distance in all Arabia; and the price of a milch-camel the standard of value in the interior. When they have little or no water the miserable nomads rinse their hands in camel's water and the nomad women wash their babes in it. Camel's-milk is the staple diet of thousands in Arabia even though it be bitter because of wormwood pasturage.

As to the character of the camel and its good or evil nature authorities differ. Lady Ann Blunt considers the camel the most abused and yet the most patient animal in existence. Palgrave, on the other hand, thus describes the stupidity and ugly temper of the beast. "I have, while in England, heard and read more than once of the docile camel. If docile means stupid, well and good; in such a case the camel is the very model of docility. But if the epithet is intended to designate an animal that takes an interest in its rider so far as a beast can, that obeys from a sort of submissive or half fellow-feeling with its master, like the horse and elephant, then I say that the camel is by no means docile, very much the contrary. He will never attempt to throw you off his back, such a trick being far beyond his limited comprehension; but if you fall off, he will never dream of stopping for you; and if turned loose it is a thousand to one he will never find his way back to his accustomed home or pasture. One only symptom will he give that he is aware of his rider, and that is when the latter is



about to mount him, for on such an occasion, instead of addressing him in the style of Balaam's more intelligent beast, 'Am not I thy camel upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day?' he will bend back his long snaky neck toward his master, open his enormous jaws to bite, if he dared, and roar out a tremendous sort of groan, as if to complain of some entirely new and unparalleled injustice about to be done him. In a word he is from first to last an undomesticated and savage animal rendered serviceable by stupidity alone. Neither attachment nor even habit can impress him; never tame, though not wide-awake enough to be exactly wild." We can bear witness that the camels we have ridden in Hassa and Yemen were altogether more kindly than the ugly creature of Palgrave.

The chief authorities on the interior of Oman were, until recent date, Niebuhr, Wellsted (1835), Whitelock (1838), Eloy (1843) and Palgrave, (1863). Palgrave, however, only visited the coast and his account of the interior and its history is pure romance. Later travellers have visited the chief cities of Jebel Achdar and corroborated the accuracy of Lieutenant Wellsted in his "*Travels in Arabia*" Unfortunately Wellsted's acquaintance even with colloquial Arabic was very limited and he frankly avows that he encountered serious difficulties in understanding the people. "Wellsted's map," says Badger, "is the only one of the province which we possess drawn up from personal observation and . . . it affords little or no certain indication of the numerous towns and villages beyond the restricted routes of the travellers. It is remarkable and by no means creditable to the British Government in India, that, notwithstanding our intimate political and commercial relations with Oman, for the last century, we know actually less of that country beyond the coast than we do of the Lake districts of Africa"<sup>1</sup> Badger wrote in 1860, but although Colonel Miles and others have visited the region of Jebel

<sup>1</sup> "*History of Oman*,"

Achdar, all the country beyond is still largely *terra incognita*. No one has ever made the journey beyond the range of mountains or solved the mystery of Western Oman, which is still a blank on the best maps, nor do we know anything of the land 100 miles southwest of Muscat, save by Arab hearsay.

The highlands of Oman may be divided into three districts; *Ja'alan* from Jebel Saffan to Jebel Fatlah on the east. *Oman* proper on the Jebel Achdar, and *Ez-Zahirah* on the eastern slopes of Jebel Okdat. The most populous and fertile district is that of Jebel Achdar which is also the best known. The fertility of the whole region is wonderful and in striking contrast with the barren rocks of so large a part of the coast. With a semi-tropical climate, an elevation of 3,000 to 5,000 feet and abundant springs the wadys and oases of Oman have awakened the delight and amazement of every traveller who has ventured to explore them. Water, the one priceless treasure in all Arabia, here issues in perennial streams from many rocky clefts and is most carefully husbanded by the ingenuity of the people, for wide irrigation, by means of canals or watercourses called *faluji*. Wellsted thus describes these underground aqueducts: "They are as far as I know peculiar to this country, and are made at an expense of labor and skill more Chinese than Arabian. The greater part of the surface of the land being destitute of running streams on the surface, the Arabs have sought in elevated places for springs or fountains beneath it. A channel from this fountain-head is then, with a very slight descent, bored in the direction in which it is to be conveyed, leaving apertures at regular distances to afford light and air to those who are occasionally sent to keep it clean. In this way the water is frequently conducted for a distance of six or eight miles, and an unlimited supply is thus obtained. These channels are about four feet broad and two feet deep and contain a clear, rapid stream. Most of the large towns or oases have four or five of these rivulets or *fali* (plural *faluji*) running into them. The isolated spots to which water is thus

conveyed, possess a soil so fertile that nearly every grain, fruit or vegetable, common to India, Arab or Persia, is produced almost spontaneously; and the tales of the oases will be no longer regarded as an exaggeration, since a single step conveys the traveller from the glare and sand of the desert into a fertile tract, watered by a hundred rills, teeming with the most luxurious vegetation."

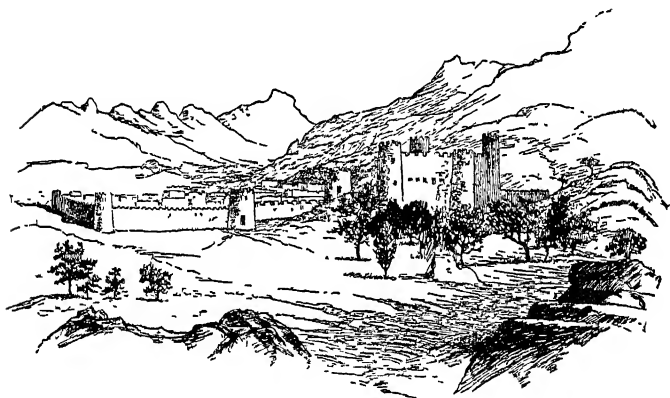
The chief caravan routes inland start from the coast, at Sohar through Wady-el-Jazy, at Suak through Wady Thala, at Barka or Sib through Wady Mithaal and Wady Zailah (alternative routes) at Matra, by the same, and at Sur through Wady Falj. On the eastern side of the mountain range the chief towns are Rastak, Nakhl and Someil. On the farther side we have Tenoof, Behilah and Nezwa, all large towns well-watered. "Between these fertile oases one travels<sup>1</sup> sometimes an entire day through stony wady, or over volcanic rock, climbing a difficult mountain pass, or crossing a wide sea-like desert, without seeing a habitation or meeting a fellow-creature except an occasional caravan. Their rifles are swung over the shoulders of the riders, and their wild song keeps time with the slow tread of the camels. . . .

"From Nakhl it is a long day's journey to Lihiga at the foot of Jebel Achdar. Two other beautifully situated mountain villages, Owkan and Koia are in close proximity. Here, as well as on the mountains, dwells a tribe of hardy mountaineers, the Bni Ryam. In features and habits this tribe is quite distinct from the other Oman tribes. All over these mountains the people lead a peaceful life, and the absence of fire-arms was noticeable in comparison with the valley tribes, where each man carries his rifle, often of the best English or German pattern.

"From Lihiga we began the ascent, and after a half-a-day

<sup>1</sup> The remainder of the chapter is quoted from the letters of my brother, Rev. P. J. Zwemer, and the sketch of Tenoof was drawn by him on one of his journeys.

of most difficult climbing, reached the top of the pass at noon-day, my barometer registering 7,050 feet. Here on a level projecting rock, which afforded a splendid extended view of the Wady Mestel, where dwell the Bnī Ruweihah, we had our lunch, and were glad to slake our thirst out of the goatskin the guide carried on his shoulder. From the top of the pass we descended to the level table-land at a height of 6,200 feet, and at sunset reached the ideally beautiful village of Sheraegah. It is in a circular ravine several hundred feet in depth, and like



TENOOF FROM THE EAST.

From a pencil sketch by Peter J Zwemer.

a huge amphitheatre where grow in terraces, apples, peaches, pomegranates, grapes and other temperate products in rich profusion. Ice and snow are frequently seen here during the winter, and in summer the temperature registers no higher than 80° F. In March we had a temperature of 40°, and enjoyed a huge fire in the guest-room where a hundred Arabs came to visit us, and entertained us with the recitation of Arabic poetry. Such an opportunity was not to be neglected, and they, as an agricultural people, were interested in the parable of the Sower and the explanation. . . .

“We pressed on over the most difficult mountain roads to Tenoof, at the foot of the mountains on the further side Nizwa, the old capital of Oman, is but three hours’ journey from Tenoof. It has a large circular fort about 200 feet in diameter, built of rough hewn stone and cement. We intended to return to Muscat along the valley road via Someil, but the state of affairs at Nezwa made roads through hostile territory unsafe, and we decided to recross the mountains, enjoying again their cool climate and the friendliness of the people. By riding long camel-stages and taking short rests, we were able to reach Muscat from the top of the mountains in four days, having been absent on the journey twenty-one days.”

## X

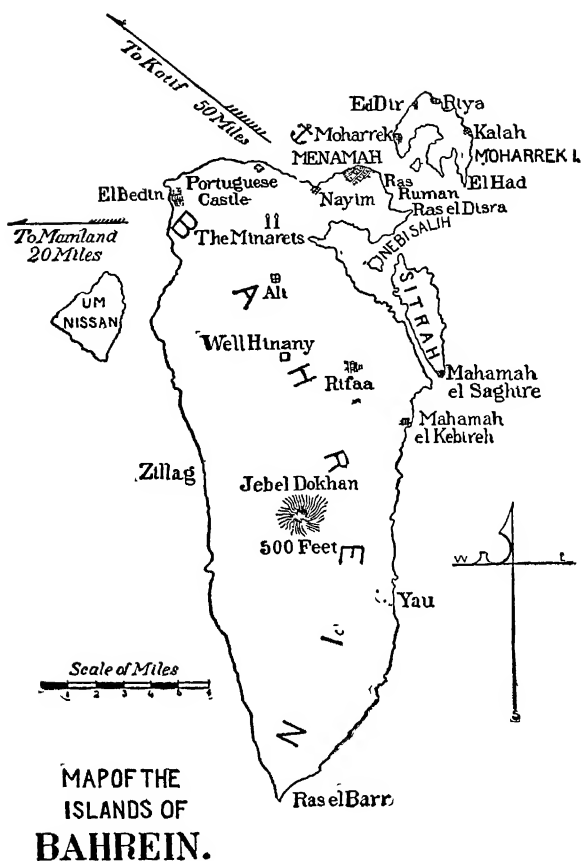
### THE PEARL ISLANDS OF THE GULF

“‘We are all from the highest to the lowest slaves of one master—Pearl,’ said Mohammed bin Thanee to me one evening ; nor was the expression out of place. All thought, all conversation, all employment, turns on that one subject, everything else is mere by-game, and below even secondary consideration.”—*Palgrave*.

**H**ALF way down the Persian Gulf, off the east Arabian coast, between the peninsula of El Katar and the Turkish province of El Hassa, are the islands of Bahrein<sup>1</sup>. This name was formerly applied to the entire triangular projection on the coast between the salt-sea of the gulf and the fresh water flood of the Euphrates, hence its name *Bahr-ein* “the two seas.” But since the days of Burckhardt’s map the name is restricted to the archipelago. The larger island is itself often called Bahrein, while the next in size is named Moharrekk—“place of burning.” The Arabs say that this was so named because the Hindu traders used it for cremating their dead.

The main island is about twenty-seven miles in length from

<sup>1</sup> These islands are identified by Sprenger and others with Dedan of the Scriptures, (*Ezekiel* xxvii. 15), and were known to the Romans by the name of Tylos. Pliny writes of the cotton-trees, “*arbores vocant gossypinos fertiliores etiam Tylo minore*.”—(xii. 10). Strabo describes the Phœnician temples that existed on the islands, and Ptolemy speaks of the pearl-fisheries which from time immemorial flourished along these coasts. The geographer, Juba, also tells of a battle fought off the islands between the Romans and the Arabs. Ptolemy’s ancient map shows how little was known as to the size or location of the group. Even Niebuhr’s map, which is wonderfully correct in the main, makes a great error in the position of the islands; in his day the two principal islands were called Owail and Aïad, names which still linger.



north to south, and ten miles in breadth. Toward the centre there is a slightly elevated table-land, mostly barren. Twelve miles from the northern end is a clump of dark volcanic hills, 400 feet high, called Jebel Dokhan, "Mountain of Smoke." The northern half of the island is well watered by abundant fresh-water springs, always luke-warm in temperature. This part of the island is covered with beautiful gardens of date-

palms, pomegranate, and other trees. The coast is everywhere low, and the water shallow for a long distance. There is no pier or jetty anywhere, so that, except at high water, boats anchor nearly a quarter of a mile from the shore.

The total population of the islands is estimated at nearly 60,000, all of them Moslems with the exception of about 100 Banian traders from Sindh, India. Menamah, the large town on the northeast point of the island, with perhaps 10,000 inhabitants, is built along the shore for about a mile; the houses are mostly poor, many being mere mat-huts. This town is the market-place and commercial centre for the whole group. Here is the post office and custom-house and here the bulk of the trade is carried on for the whole island. A short distance from Menamah is the old town of Belad le Kadim, with ruins of better buildings and a fine mosque with two minarets. The mosque is of very early date, for the older Cufic character is on all its inscriptions, covered over in some places by more recent carving and inscriptions in later Arabic.

The largest spring on the islands is called El Adhari, "the virgins." It issues from a reservoir thirty yards across, and at least thirty feet deep, flowing in a stream six or eight feet wide and two feet deep. This is remarkable for Arabia, and gives some idea of the abundant supply of water. Under the sea, near the island of Moharrek, are fresh-water springs always covered with a fathom of salt water. The natives lower a hollow, weighted bamboo through which the fresh water gushes out a few inches above sea-level. The source of these fresh-water springs of Bahrein must be on the mainland of Arabia, as all the opposite coast shows a similar phenomena. Apparently the *River Aftan* marked on old maps of the peninsula as emptying into the Persian Gulf near Bahrein was an *under-ground river*, known to the older geographers.

If Egypt is the gift of the Nile, Bahrein may well be called the gift of the pearl-oyster. Nothing else gave the islands their ancient history, and nothing so much gives them their



present importance. The pearl-fisheries are the one great industry of Bahrein. They are carried on every year from June until October, and even for a longer period, if hot weather sets in earlier. Nearly all the island population are engaged in the work in some way, and during the season there is only one topic of conversation in the coffee-shops and the evening-mejlis,—PEARLS. The pearl has this distinction above all other precious stones, that it requires no human hand to bring out its beauties. By modern scientists, pearls are believed to be the result of an abnormal secretion, caused by the irritation of the mollusk's shell by some foreign substance—in short, a disease of the pearl-oyster. But it is not surprising that the Arabs have many curious superstitions as to the cause of pearl-formation. Their poets tell of how the monsoon rains falling on the banks of Ceylon and Bahrein find chance lodgment in the opened mouth of the pearl-oyster. Each drop distills a gem, and the size of the raindrop determines the luck of the future diver. Heaven-born and cradled in the deep blue sea, it is the purest of gems and, in their eyes, the most precious.

Not only in its creation, but in its liberation from its prison-house under ten fathoms of water the pearl costs pain and sacrifice. So far as this can be measured in pounds, shillings and pence, this cost is easy of computation. The total value of pearls exported from Bahrein in 1896 was £303,941 sterling (\$1,500,000). The number of boats from Bahrein engaged in the fisheries is about nine hundred and the cost of bringing one boat's share to the surface is 4,810 rupees (about \$1,600).<sup>1</sup> Hundreds of craft also come to the oyster-banks from other ports on the gulf. It is scarcely necessary to say that the pearl divers do not receive the amount fairly due them for their toil. They are one and all victims of the "truck-system" in its worst form, being obliged to purchase all supplies, etc.,

<sup>1</sup> This cost is divided as follows: Fishing smack *r.* 400, wages of 10 divers *r.* 2,000; wages of 12 rope-holders *r.* 2,400; apparatus *r.* 40. Total *rupees* 4,810.

from their masters. They are consequently so much in debt to him as often to make them practically his slaves. The boats are generally owned by the merchants, and the crew are paid at a low rate for a whole year's work, only receiving a small extra allowance when they bring up pearls of special size or brilliancy. In the winter season these divers are out of work, and consequently incur large debts which are charged to the next season's account. By force of circumstances and age-long practice the islanders are also much given to the vice of gambling on the market. Even the poorest fisherman will lay his wager—and lose it. It is not the thirty thousand fishermen of the gulf with their more than five thousand boats who grow rich in the pearl-fishing business; the real profit falls to those who remain on shore—the Arab and Hindu brokers of Bombay who deal direct with Berlin, London and Paris. A pearl often trebles in value by changing hands, even before it reaches the Bombay market.

The divers follow the most primitive method in their work. Their boats are such as their ancestors used before the Portuguese were expelled from Bahrein in 1622. Even Sinbad the sailor might recognize every rope and the odd spoon-shaped oars. These boats are of three kinds, very similar in general appearance, but differing in size, called *Bakāret*, *Shua'ee* and *Bateel*<sup>1</sup>. All of the boats have good lines and are well-built by the natives from Indian timber. For the rest, all is of Bahrein manufacture except their pulley-blocks, which come from Bombay. Sailcloth is woven at Menamah and ropes are twisted of date-fibre in rude rope-walks which have no machinery worth mentioning. Even the long, soft iron nails that hold the boats together are hammered out on the anvil one by one by Bahrein blacksmiths.

Each boat has a sort of figure-head, called the *kubait*, generally covered with the skin of a sheep or goat which was

<sup>1</sup> The *Mashooah* is a much smaller boat, like the English jolly-boat, and is used in the harbor and for short journeys around the islands.

sacrificed when the boat was first launched. This is one of the Semitic traits which appear in various forms all over Arabia—blood-sacrifice—and which has Islam never uprooted. All the fishermen prefer to go out in a boat which has cut a covenant of blood with Neptune. The larger boats used in diving hold from twenty to forty men, less than half of whom are divers, while the others are rope-holders and oarsmen. One man in each boat is called *El Mūsūllī*, *i e*, the one-who-prays, because his sole daily duty is to take charge of the rope of any one who stops to pray or eat. He has no regular work, and when not otherwise engaged vicariously mends ropes and sails or cooks the rice and fish over charcoal embers. He is therefore also called *El Gillās*, “the sitter,” very suggestive of his sinecure office.

The divers wear no elaborate diving-suit, but descend clothed only in their *fitaam* and *khabaat*. The first is a true *pince-nez* or clothespin-like clasp for their nostrils. It is made of two thin slices of horn fastened together with a rivet or cut out whole in a quarter circle so as to fit the lower part of the nose and keep out the water. It has a perforated head through which a string passes and which suspends it from the divers neck when not in use. *Khabaat* are “finger-hats” made of leather and thrice the length of an ordinary thimble. They are worn to protect the fingers in gathering the pearl-shells from the sea-bottom; at the height of the pearl season large baskets full of all sizes of these finger-caps are exposed for sale in the bazaar. Each diver uses two sets (*twenty*) in a season. A basket, called *dayeen*, and a stone-weight complete the diver’s outfit. This stone, on which the diver stands when he plunges down feet-first, is fastened to a rope passing between his toes and is immediately raised; another rope is attached to the diver and his basket by which he gives the signal and is drawn up. The best divers remain below only two or three minutes at most, and when they come up are nine-tenths suffocated. Many of them are brought up unconscious and

often cannot be brought to life. Deafness, and suppuration of the ear, due to carelessness or perforated ear-drums, caused by the enormous pressure of the water at such depths, are common among divers. Rheumatism and neuralgia are universal and the pearl-fishers are the great exception among the Arabs in not possessing beautiful teeth

Sharks are plentiful and it is not a rare thing for them to attack divers. But the Bahrein divers are more fearful of a small species of devil-fish which lays hold of any part of the body and draws blood rapidly. Against this monster of the sea they guard themselves by wearing an "overall" of white cloth during the early part of the season when it frequents the banks. Their tales of horror regarding the devil-fish equal those of Victor Hugo in his "Toilers of the Sea."

The divers remain out in their boats as long as their supply of fresh water lasts, often three weeks or even more. Sir Edwin Arnold's lines are thus not as correct as they are beautiful :

"Deal as the wet diver to the eyes  
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore  
By sands of Bahrein in the Persian Gulf,  
Plunging all day in the blue waves ; at night,  
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,  
Rejoins her in their hut upon the shore."

When the pearl-oysters are brought up they are left on deck over night and the next morning are opened by means of a curved knife, six inches long, called *miflaket*. Before the days of English commerce the mother-of-pearl was thrown away as worthless. Now it has a good market-value and (after being scraped free of the small parasites that infest the outer shell) is packed in wooden crates and exported in large quantities. The total value of this export in 1897 was £5,694 (\$28,000). The Arabs have asked me in amazement what in the world the "Franks" do with empty sea-shells ; and some tell idle tales of

how they are ground up into pearl dust and pressed into artificial gems, or are used as a veneer to cover brick houses.

On shore the pearls are classified by the merchants, according to weight, size, shape, color and brilliancy. There are button-pearls, pendants, roundish, oval, flat, and perfect pearls, pearls, white, yellow, golden, pink, blue, azure, green, grey, dull and black, seed-pearls the size of grains of sand and pearls as large as an Arab's report, emphasized with frequent *wallahs*, can make them. I have seen a pendant pearl the size of a hazelnut worth a few thousand rupees but there are Arabs who will swear by the prophet's beard (each hair of which is sacred <sup>1</sup>) that they have brought up pearls as large as a pigeon's egg. The pearl brokers carry their wares about tied in bags of turkey-red calico; they weigh them in tiny brass scales and learn their exact size by an ingenious device consisting of a nest of brass sieves, called *taoos*, six in number, with apertures slightly differing in size. The pearls are put into the largest sieve first; those that do not fall through its pea-sized holes are called, *Ras*, "chief"; such are generally pearls of great price, although their value depends most on weight and perfection of form. The second size is called *Batu* "belly," and the third *Dhail*, "tail." Color has only a fashion-value, Europe prefers white and the Orient the golden-yellow; black pearls are not highly esteemed by Orientals.

Before they are shipped the large pearls are cleaned in *reeta* a kind of native soap-powder, and the smaller ones in soft brown sugar; then they are tied up in calico and sold in lots by weight, each bundle being supposed to contain pearls of average equal value. How it is possible to collect custom dues on *pearls* among a people whose consciences rival their wide breast-pockets in concealing capacity, surpasses comprehension. But the thing is done, for the farmer of the custom dues grows rich and the statistics of export are not pure guess-work.

The Bahrein islands also produce quantities of dates, and there is an export trade in a remarkably fine breed of asses, celebrated

all over the Persian Gulf. A good Bahrein donkey is easy to ride and almost as good a roadster as an average horse. The only manufactures, beside sail-sheeting, are coarse cloth for turbans, and reed-mats of very fine texture. The chief imports are rice, timber and piece-goods for which Bahrein is the depot for all eastern Arabia. Three sights are shown to the stranger-tourist to the islands of Bahrein: the pearl-fisheries, the fresh-water springs, and the ancient ruins of an early civilization at the village of Ali. These ruins are the "*bayoot el owalin*" the dwellings of the first inhabitants, who are believed to have been destroyed by Allah because of their wickedness. An hour's ride through the date gardens and past the minarets brings us to the village of Ali. It can generally be seen from a good distance because of the smoke which rises from the huge ovens where pottery is baked. The potter turns his wheel to-day and fashions the native water-jars with deft hand utterly ignorant and careless of the curious sepulchral tumuli which cast their shade at his feet. South and west of the village the whole plain is studded with mounds, at least three hundred of them, the largest being about forty feet in height. Only two or three have ever been opened or explored. Theodore Bent in company with his wife explored these in 1889, with meagre results, but no further investigations have been made though it is a field that may yet yield large results. M. Jules Oppert, the French Assyriologist, and others regard the island as an extremely old centre of civilization and it is now well known that the first settlements from ancient Babylonia were in the Persian Gulf which then extended as far north as Mugheir, near Suk-es Shuikh. But those first settlers probably went to the coasts of Africa and to the kingdoms of Southern Arabia, in which case Bahrein was on their line of travel. It must always have been a depot for shipping because of its abundant water-supply in a region where fresh-water is generally scarce. The mounds at Ali probably date from this very early period; although no corroboration in the shape of

cylinders or bricks bearing inscriptions has yet been found, the character of the structures found in the mounds is undoubted proof of their great antiquity.

The larger mound opened by Bent, now consists of two rock-built chambers of very large stones, square masonry, and no trace of an arch or a pillar. The lower chamber is twenty-eight feet in length, five feet in width, and eight feet high, it has four niches or recesses about three feet deep, two at the end of the passage and two near its entrance. The upper chamber is of the same length as the lower, but its width is six inches less, and its height only four feet eight inches. The lower passage is hand plastered as an impression of the mason's hand on the side wall still proves. If diggings were made *below* the mounds or other mounds were opened better results might follow, and perhaps inscriptions or cylinders would be discovered. A year or two ago a jar containing a large number of gold coins was found near Ali by some native workmen, these however were Cufic and of a much later period than the mounds. Near Yau and Zillag, on the other side of the island there are also ruins and very deep wells cut through solid rock with *deep* rope-marks on the curbing; perhaps these also are of early date. On the island of Moharrek there is a place called *Ed Dair*, "the monastery" with ruins of what the Arabs call a church; whether this is of Portuguese date like the castle or goes back to a much earlier period before Mohammed, we cannot tell.

The climate of Bahrein is not as bad as it is often described by casual visitors. No part of the Persian Gulf can be called a health resort, but neither is the climate unhealthful at all seasons of the year. In March and April, October, November and December the weather is delightful, indoor temperatures seldom rising above 85° F., or falling below 60° F. When north winds blow in January and February it is often cold enough for a fire; these are the rainy months of the year and least healthful, especially to the natives in their badly-built

mat-huts From May to September inclusive is the hot season, although the nights remain cool and the heat is tempered by sea-breezes (called, *El Barīh*), until the middle of June. Heavy dews at night are common and make the atmosphere murky and oppressive when there is no sea-breeze Land-breezes from the west and south continue irregularly throughout the entire summer When they fail the thermometer leaps to over one hundred and remains there day and night until the ripples on the stagnant, placid sea proclaim a respite from the torture of sweltering heat A record of temperature, kept at Menamah village in the summer of 1893, shows a minimum indoor temperature of 85° and a maximum of 107° F., in the shade. The prevailing wind at Bahrein, and in fact all over the Gulf, is the *shemmāl* or Northwester changing its direction slightly with the trend of the coast. The air during a *shemmāl* is generally very dry and the sky cloudless, but in winter they are sometimes at first accompanied by rain-squalls In winter they are very severe and endanger the shipping The only other strong wind is called *kāus*, it is a southeaster and blows irregularly from December to April It is generally accompanied by thick, gloomy weather, with severe squalls and falling barometer. The saying among sailors that "there is always too much wind in the Gulf or none at all," is very true of Bahrein.

This saying holds true also of the political history of the Gulf. Bahrein, because of its pearl-trade has ever been worth contending for and it has been a bone of contention among the neighboring rulers ever since the naval battle fought by the early inhabitants against the Romans After Mohammed's day the Carmathians overran the islands Portuguese, Arabs from Oman, Persians, Turks and lastly the English have each in turn claimed rule or protection over the archipelago It is sufficient to note here that in 1867, 'Isa bin Ali (called *Esau* in Curzon's "Persia," as if the name came from Jacob's brother instead of the Arab form of Jesus') was appointed ruling



Sheikh by the British who deposed his father Mohammed bin Khalifa for plotting piacy.

The present Sheikh is a typical Arab and spends most of his time in hawking and the chase, the religious rule, which in a Moslem land means the judicial and executive department, rests with the *Kadi* or Judge. There is no legislature as the law was laid down once for all in the Koran and the traditions. The administration of *justice* is rare. Oppression, black-mail and bribery are universal; and, except in commerce and the slave-trade, English protection has brought about no reforms on the island. To be "protected" means here strict neutrality as to the internal affairs and absolute dictation as to affairs with other governments. To "protect" means to keep matters in *status quo* until the hour is ripe for annexation. Sometimes the process from the one to the other is so gradual as to resemble growth; in such a case it would be correct to speak of the growth of the British Empire.

Contact with Europeans and western civilization has, however, done much for Bahrein in the matter of disarming prejudice and awakening the sluggish mind of the Arab to look beyond his own "Island of the Arabs." Even as early as 1867, Palgrave could write: "From the maritime and in a manner central position of Bahrein my readers may of themselves conjecture that the profound ignorance of Nejd regarding Europeans and their various classifications is here exchanged for a partial acquaintance with those topics; thus, English and French, disfigured into the local *Ingleez* and *Francees* are familiar words at Menamah, though Germans and Italians, whose vessels seldom or never visit these seas, have as yet no place in the Bahrein vocabulary, while Dutch and Portuguese seem to have fallen into total oblivion. But Russians or *Moskops*, that is Muscovites, are alike known and feared, thanks to Persian intercourse and the instinct of nations. Beside the policy of Constantinople and Teheran are freely and at times sensibly discussed in these coffee-houses no

less than the stormy diplomacy of Nejd and her dangerous encroachments ”

To the Bahrein Arabs Bombay is the centre of the world of civilization, and he who has seen that city is distinguished as knowing all about the ways of foreigners. So anxious are the boys for a trip on the British India steamer to this Eldorado of science and mystery that they sometimes run from home and go as stowaways or beg their passage. This close contact with India has had its effect on the Arabic spoken on the island which, although not a dialect, is full of Hindustani words. Of late years there has been a considerable Persian immigration into Bahrein from the coast between Lingah and Bushire, and next to Arabic, Persian is the language most in use.

## XI

### THE EASTERN THRESHOLD OF ARABIA

**B**EYOND Bahrein the mainland stretches westward for eight hundred miles across the province of Hassa and lower Nejd and Hejaz to the Red Sea. As Jiddah is the western port, Bahrein is the eastern port for all Arabia. It is the gateway to the interior, the threshold of which is Hassa. Draw a line from Menamah to Katif, then on to Hofhoof (or El Hassa) and thence back to Menamah, and the triangle formed will include every important town or village of Eastern Arabia. North of that triangle on the coast is the inhospitable barren, thinly populated, country of the Bnī Hajar; south of it is the peninsula of El Katar; westward stretches the sandy desert for five days' marches to Riad and the old Wahabi country. The region thus bounded is really the whole of Hassa, although on maps that name is given to the whole coast as far as Busiah. But neither the authority of the Turkish government nor the significance of the word *Hassa* (low, moist ground) can be said to extend outside of the triangle.

The peninsula of El Katar, about 100 miles long and fifty broad, is unattractive in every way and barren enough to be called a desert. Palgrave's pen-picture cannot be improved upon: "To have an idea of Katar my readers must figure to themselves miles on miles of low barren hills, bleak and sun-scorched, with hardly a single tree to vary the dry monotonous outline; below these a muddy beach extends for a quarter of a mile seaward in slimy quicksands, bordered by a rim of sludge and seaweed. If we look landwards beyond the hills we see what by extreme courtesy may be called pasture land, dreary downs with twenty pebbles for every blade of grass;





and over this melancholy ground scene, but few and far between, little clusters of wretched, most wretched earth cottages and palm-leaf huts, narrow, ugly and low, these are the villages, or 'towns' (for so the inhabitants style them) of Katar. Yet poor and naked as is the land it has evidently something still poorer and nakeder behind it, something in short even more devoid of resources than the coast itself, and the inhabitants of which seek here by violence what they cannot find at home. For the villages of Katar are each and all carefully walled in, while the downs beyond are lined with towers and here and there a castle, huge and square with its little windows and narrow portals."

The population of Katar is not large; its principal town is Bedaa'. All the inhabitants live from the sea by pearl-diving and fishing, and in the season send out two hundred boats. The whole peninsula with its wild Bedouin population is claimed by Turkey and is the dread of the miserable soldiers who are sent there to preserve peace and draw precarious pay while they shake with malaria and grow homesick for Bagdad. The Arabs are always at feud with the government and it is very unsafe outside the walls after sunset.

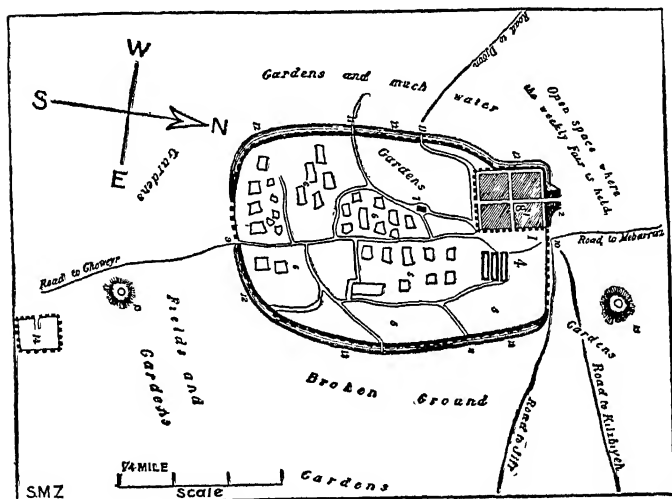
The usual route from Bahrein to the interior of Hassa is to cross over by boat to Ojeir on the mainland, and thence to travel by caravan to Hofhoof. In October, 1893, I took this route, returning from the capital to Katif and thence back to Menamah. Embarking at sunset we landed at Ojeir before dawn the next day and I found my way to a Turkish custom-house officer to whom I had a friendly letter from a Bahrein merchant. Ojeir, although it has neither a bazaar nor any settled population, has a mud-fort, a dwarf flagstaff and an imposing custom-house. The harbor although not deep is protected against north and south winds and is therefore a good landing-place for the immense quantity of rice and piece-goods shipped from Bahrein into the interior. A caravan of from two to three hundred camels leaves Ojeir every week. For

although the Jebel Shammar country is probably supplied overland from Busrah and Bagdad, the whole of Southern Nejd receives piece-goods, coffee, rice, sugar and Birmingham wares by way of Bahrein and Ojeir.

The whole plain in and about the custom-house was piled with bales and boxes and the air filled with the noise of loading seven hundred camels. I struck a bargain with Salih, a Nejdî, to travel in his party and before noon-prayers we were off. The country for many hours was bare desert, here and there a picturesque ridge of sand, and in one place a vein of greenish limestone. When night came we all stretched a blanket on the clean sand and slept in the open air; those who had neglected their water-skins on starting now satisfied thirst by scooping a well with their hands three or four feet deep and found a supply of water. During the day the sun was hot and the breeze died away; but at night, under the sparkling stars and with a north wind it seemed, by contrast, bitterly cold. On the second day at noon we sighted the palm-forests that surround Hofhoof and give it, Palgrave says, "the general aspect of a white and yellow onyx chased in an emerald rim." As we did not reach the "emerald rim" until afternoon I concluded to remain at Jifr, one of the many suburb villages. Here Salih had friends, and a delicious dinner of bread, butter, milk and dates, all fresh, was one of many tokens of hospitality. At sunset we went on to the next village, Menazeleh, a distance of about three miles through gardens and rushing streams of tepid water. The next morning early we again rode through gardens and date-orchards half visible in the morning mist. At seven o'clock the mosques and walls of Hofhoof appeared right before us as the sun lifted the veil; it was a beautiful sight.

El Hofhoof can claim a considerable age. Under the name of Hajar, it was next to Mobarrez, the citadel town of the celebrated Bnî Kindî and Abd El Kais (570 A. D.). Both of these towns, and in fact every village of Hassa, owe their

existence to the underground watercourses, which are the chief characteristic of the province; everywhere there is the same abundance of this great blessing. A land of streams and fountains,—welling up in the midst of the salt sea, as at Bahrein, flowing unknown and unsought under the dry desert at Ojeir, bubbling up in perennial fountains as at Katif; or bursting out in seven hot springs that flow, cooling, to bless wide fields of rice and wheat at Mobarrez. The entire region



PALGRAVE'S PLAN OF HOFHOOF.

is capable of rich cultivation, and yet now more than half of it is desert. There is not a man to till the ground, and paradise lies waste except near the villages. Elsewhere Bedoun robbers and Turkish taxes prevent cultivation. *These two are the curse of agriculture all over the Ottoman provinces of Arabia*

Hofhoof itself is surrounded by gardens, and its plan gives a good idea of the general character of the towns of Arabia. A castle or ruler's house; a bazaar with surrounding dwellings and a mud-wall built around to protect the whole. The moat



is now dry and half filled in with the débris of the walls, which are not in good repair. The town is nearly a mile and a-half across at its greater diameter, but the houses are not built as close together as is the custom in most Oriental towns, here is the pleasant feature of gardens *inside* the walls. The date-palm predominates, and indeed comes to wonderful perfection, but the nabak, the papay, the fig and the pomegranate are also in evidence. Indigo is cultivated, and also cotton, while all the region round about is green with fields of rice and sugar-cane and vegetables,—onions, radishes, beans, vetches, and maize.

The population of the city is entirely Moslem, except one Roman Catholic Christian, who is the Turkish doctor, and a half dozen Jews. The three Europeans who have previously visited and described Hofhoof are, Captain Sadler (1819), Palgrave (1863), and Colonel Pelly (1865). The first gives the population at 15,000 and Palgrave speaks of 20,000 to 30,000. In 1871 when the Turkish expedition against Nejd took the city, they reported it to have 15,000 houses and 200 suburb villages (!) This shows the absolute uncertainty of most statistics in regard to Arabia.

El Hassa (Hofhoof) is the first stage on the direct caravan route from east Arabia to Mecca and Jiddah. Abd Er Rahman bin Salama, the Arab Sheikh, under the Turkish governor of the Rifa'a quarter of the town gave me the following information regarding this route. From Hassa to Riad is six days by camel, from Riad to Jebel Shammar nine days; to Wady Dauasir seven; and from Riad to Mecca eighteen days. That would be *twenty-eight days* to cross the peninsula, not including stops on the road and travelling at the rate of an ordinary caravan, *i e.*, three miles an hour.

The Kaisariyeh or bazaar of Hofhoof is well supplied with all the usual requirements and luxuries of the Levant, weapons, cloth, gold embroidery, dates, vegetables, dried fish, wood, salted locusts, fruit, sandals, tobacco, copper-ware and piece-goods—in irregular confusion as enumerated. Public auctions

are held frequently in the square or on the plain outside the walls. Here, too, the barbers ply their trade, and blacksmiths beat at their anvils under the shade of a date-hut. The Rifa'a quarter has the *best* houses, while the Na'athal has the largest number; the "East-end" in Hofhoof being for the rich and the "West-end" for the poor, as is proper in a land of paradoxes.

Hassa is celebrated for two sorts of manufacture; cloaks or *abbas*, with rich embroidery in gold and colored thread, delicately wrought and of elegant pattern, the gayest and costliest garments of Arabia, and brass coffee-pots of curious shape and pretty form, which, with the cloaks, are exported all over Eastern Arabia, even as far as Busrah and Muscat. Once trade flourished and the merchants grew rich in this land of easy agriculture and fertile soil. But intestine wars, Wahabi fanaticism and Turkish indolence, extortion and taxation have taken away prosperity, and Hassa's capital is not what it was in the days of old, when the Carmathians held the town.

One remnant of its former glory remains, a unique and entirely local coinage called the *Toweelah* or "long-bit." It consists of a small copper-bar, mixed with a small proportion of silver, about an inch in length, split at one end and with a fissure slightly opened. Along one or both of its flattened sides run a few Cufic characters, nearly illegible in most specimens, but said to read: *Mohammed-al-Saood, i.e.*, "Mohammed of the Saood family." The coin has neither date nor motto, but was undoubtedly made by one of the Carmathian Princes about the year 920 A. D. This Moslem sect owed its origin to a fanatic and enthusiast born at Cufa, called Carmath, who first had a following about the year 277 of the Hejira. He assumed the lofty titles, Guide, Director, the Word, the Holy Ghost, the Herald of the Messiah, etc. His interpretation of the Koran was very lax in the matters of ablution, fasting, and pilgrimage, but he increased the number of prayers to fifty daily. He had twelve apostles among the Bedouins, and his

sect grew so rapidly that they could muster in the field 107,000 fanatical warriors. Cufa and Busrah were pillaged and Bagdad taken. In 929 Abu Taher stormed the Holy City of Mecca and the Carmathians took away the black stone in triumph to Katif. The centre of their power remained at Hassa for some years. Here the coin was struck, which is the only remnant of their power and fanaticism. And while the Carmathian doctrines are held in abhorrence, their little bars of copper still buy rice and dates and stick to the hands of the money-changer in the bazaar.

In former days there were gold and silver coins of similar shape. Some in silver can yet be found occasionally inscribed with the noble motto in Arabic: "*Honor to the sober man, dishonor to the ambitious.*" When I was in Hofhoof that strange, two-tailed copper-bar was worth half an anna and disputed its birthright in the market with rupees and Indian paper and Maria Theresa dollars and Turkish coppers. But how changed the bazaar itself would appear to the ghost of some Carmathian warrior of the ninth century who first handled a "long-bit." Even the Wahabis have disappeared and tobacco, silk, music and wine are no longer deadly sins. Of these Moslem Puritans many have left for Riad, and the few that remain stroke their long white beards in horror at Turkish Effendis in infidel breeches smoking cigarettes, while they sigh for the golden days of the Arabian Reformer.

There is a military hospital at Hofhoof with a surgeon and doctor, but at the time of my visit there was a dearth of medicines and an abominable lack of sanitation. Few soldiers submit to hospital treatment, preferring to desert or seek furlough elsewhere, and nothing is done for the Arab population. Before my coming cholera raged here as well as on the coast, and during my short visit smallpox was epidemic and carried off many, many children. Thrice awful are such diseases in a land where a practical fanaticism, under the pious cloak of religion, scorns medicine or preventive measures.

The government of the province of Hassa is as follows. The *Sandjak* (Turkish for administrative division) is divided into three *cazas*, Nejd, Katar and Katif and a small garrison holds each of these *cazas*, 600 men at Hofhoof, and 300 at Katar and Katif. The governor, called Mutaserrif Pasha, resides at the capital and *kaimakams* or sub-governors at the other two centres. There are the usual Turkish tribunals and each Arab tribe has a representative or go-between to arrange its affairs with the governor. The principal tribes which at present acknowledge Turkish occupation and submit to their rule are. El Ajeman, El Morah, Bni Hajar, Bni Khaled, Bni Hassam, El Motter, El Harb, and El Ja'afer. The Turkish government has opened three schools in the province; the total number of pupils according to the Turkish official report is 3,540. The same report puts the entire population of the province at 250,000; this gives a fair idea of the backwardness of education even in this province which has always been remarkable for book-learning. The large mosque with its twenty-four arches and porticoes, smooth-plastered and with a mat-spread floor is always full of mischievous youth learning the mysteries of grammar and the commonplaces of Moslem theology, but the days of poetry and writing of commentaries on the Koran are in the past; even the Wahabi merchants talk of Bombay and are glad to get hold of an English primer or an atlas of the new world which is knocking at their door for admittance.

After four days spent in the city I accepted an opportunity to return northward with a caravan; I was not allowed to go, however, until after I had signed a paper, which, because of the unsafety of the road disclaimed all responsibility on the part of the Government should I come to lose life, limb or luggage. A copy of this document is in my possession, but the only foe I met in the desert was—fever. On Tuesday noon our small party set out, not going through the large town of Mobarrez as I had hoped, but turning east and reaching Kilabeejeh at two o'clock.

We passed fountains and streams and fields of rice and swamps,—everything very unlike Arabia of the school-geography. In four hours, however, we were again in the midst of desert where the sun proved too hot for me and I was taken with a fever which did not leave me until I returned to Bahrein. The road continued desert all the way to Katif. On Wednesday we rode all night under the stars (because of a false alarm of robbers) until nine o'clock next morning. Then we rested at a place called, with bitter irony, Um El Hammam; there are no *baths*, no trees, no grass, only a shallow pit of dirty water and small shrubbery of dates. Here we spent a hot day. On Friday morning we came to the borders of Katif,—palm-groves, wells, and ancient aqueducts with curious towers and air-holes at intervals. Through gardens and around by the large square fort we came to the sea. At the custom-house, again, I found rest and refreshment.

Katif has no good name among Hassa Arabs; its location is low and marshy; “its inhabitants are mostly weak in frame, sallow in complexion, and suffer continually from malaria. The town itself is badly built, woefully filthy, damp and ill-favored in climate. Yet it has a good population and brisk trade. The inhabitants are mostly Shiah of Persian origin and are held in abhorrence by the Wahabis and the Turks alike as little better than infidels. The present location of Katif corresponds to the very ancient settlement of the *Gerrha* of the Greek geographers but no exploration for ruins has ever been made. A Portuguese castle marks *their* occupation of this coast also during their supremacy in the gulf. Katif was taken by the Turks in 1871 and has been occupied by them ever since.

The Arabian coast north of Katif, all the way to Kuwait is without a single large settlement. Mostly barren and in the hands of the predatory and warlike tribe of Bni Hajar, it is very uninteresting and entirely unproductive.

## XII

### THE RIVER-COUNTRY AND THE DATE-PALM

"The rich plains of Mesopotamia and Assyria which were once cultivated by a populous nation and watered by surprising efforts of human industry, are now inhabited, or rather ravaged by wandering Arabs. So long as these fertile provinces shall remain under the government, or rather anarchy of the Turks they must continue deserts in which nature dies for want of the fostering care of man"—*Niebuhr* (1792)

WHAT changes of history have left their records in ruins and names and legends on the great alluvial plains of Northeastern Arabia! The two rivers still bear their Bible names, the Euphrates and *Dyleh*, or Hiddekel, but nothing else is left which could be called paradise. What impresses the traveller first and most is that so large an extent of this fertile region lies waste and unproductive under an effete rule. The splendor of the past can scarcely be believed because of the ruin of the present. Everywhere are traces of ancient empires and yet it seems incredible as we watch the half-naked Arabs ploughing through the mud-banks with their wild cattle and primitive implements.

Was this the cradle of the human race? Babylon and Nineveh are here for the archæologist; Ctesiphon, Kufa and Zobeir for the historian; Bagdad and Busrah (or Bassorah) for old Arabian romance; and Ur of the Chaldees for the Bible student. Since Haroun Rashid went about in disguise how many yet stranger Arabian nights has Bagdad seen! How surprised Sinbad the sailor would be to see the decay of Busrah, yet with a dozen "smoke-ships" in its harbor!

Mesopotamia, called by the Arabs *El Jezira*, was formerly limited to the land lying between the two rivers and south of

the old wall by which they were connected above Bagdad. From this point to the Persian Gulf the district was and is still known as Irak-Arabi, to distinguish it from the Irak of Persia. Commonly, however, the name of Mesopotamia (Mid-River-Country) is given to the whole northeastern part of Arabia. It has a total area of 180,000 square miles and presents great uniformity in its physical as well as its ethnical characteristics. Arabs live and Arabic is spoken for three hundred miles beyond Bagdad as far as Diarbekr and Mardin, but we limit our description to the region between Busrah and Bagdad including the delta at the mouth of the rivers.

Near Bagdad the two giant rivers, after draining Eastern Asia Minor, Armenia and Kurdistan, approach quite near together; from thence the main streams are connected by several channels and intermittent watercourses, the chief of which is the Shatt-el Hai. At Kurna the two rivers unite to form the Shatt-el-Arab which traverses a flat, fertile plain dotted with villages and covered with artificially irrigated meadow-lands and extensive date groves. As far up as Bagdad the river is navigable throughout the year for steamers of considerable size. It is entirely owing to the enterprise of English commerce and the Bagdad-Busrah steamship line that the country, so gloomily described by Niebuhr, in 1792, and even by Chesney in 1840, has been developed into new life and prosperity. Even Turkish misrule and oppression cannot do away utterly with natural fertility and productiveness; and if ever a good government should hold this region it would regain its ancient importance and double its present population.

Two features are prominent in the physical geography of this region. First the flat almost level stretches of meadow without any rise or fall except the artificial ancient mounds.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The only remarkable exception is the Jebel Sinam—a rough hill of basaltic rock that crops out in the midst of the alluvial delta near Zobeir; a peculiar phenomenon, but proving Doughty's general scheme for the Arabian geology correct even here.

second is the date-palm. The whole length of the country from Fao and Mohammerah to the country of the Montefik Arabs above Kurna is one large date plantation, on both sides of the wide river. Everywhere the tall shapely trees line the horizon and near the lower estuary of the Shatt-el-Arab they are especially luxuriant and plentiful. Formerly every palm-tree on the Nile, was registered and taxed, but to count every such tree on the Shatt-el-Arab would be an unending task.

The proper coat-of-arms for all lower Mesopotamia would be a date-palm. It is the "banner of the climate" and the wealth of the country. There may be monotony in these long groves and rows of well-proportioned columns with their tops hidden in foliage, but there certainly is nothing wearisome. A date garden is a scene of exceeding beauty, varying greatly according to the time of the day and the state of the weather. At sunrise or sunset the gorgeous colors fall on the gracefully pendant fronds or steal gently through the lighter foliage and reflect a vivid green so beautiful that once seen, it can never be forgotten. At high-noon the dark shadows and deep colors of the date-forests refresh and rest the eye aching from the brazen glare of sand and sky. But the forest is at its best, when on a dewy night the full moon rises and makes a pearl glisten on every spiked leaf and the shadows show black as night in contrast with the sheen of the upper foliage.

It was an Arab poet who first sang the song of the date-palm so beautifully interpreted by Bayard Taylor :

"Next to thee, O fair Gazelle!  
 O Bedowee gnl, beloved so well,—  
 Next to the fearless Nejdee  
 Whose fleetness shall bear me again to thee—  
 Next to ye both I love the palm  
 With his leaves of beauty and fruit of balm.  
 Next to ye both, I love the tree  
 Whose fluttering shadows wrap us three  
 In love and silence and mystery.



Our tribe is many, our poets vie  
 With any under the Arab sky  
 Yet none can sing of the palm but I.  
 The noble minarets that begem  
 Cano's citadel diadem  
 Are not so light as his slender stem.  
 He lifts his leaves in the sunbeam glance  
 As the Almehs lift their arms in dance ;  
 A slumberous motion, a passionate sigh  
 That works in the cells of the blood like wine.  
 O tree of love, by that love of thine  
 Teach me how I shall soften mine."

Mark Twain compared the palm-tree to "a liberty-pole with a haycock" on top of it. The truth lies between the poet and the "Innocent" traveller, for the date-tree is both a poem and a commercial product, to the Arab mind it is the perfection of beauty and utility.

The date palm-tree is found in Syria, Asia Minor, nearly all parts of Arabia and the southern islands of the Mediterranean, but it attains to its greatest perfection in upper Egypt and Mesopotamia<sup>1</sup>. Some idea of the immense importance of this one crop in the wealth of Mesopotamia may be gained from the statement of an old English merchant at Busrah, that "the entire annual date-harvest of the River-country might conservatively be put at 150,000 tons."

The date-tree consists of a single stem or trunk about fifty to eighty feet high, without a branch, and crowned at the summit by a cluster of leaves or "palms" that drop somewhat in the shape of a huge umbrella. Each of these palms has long lanceolate leaves spreading out like a fan from the centre stem which often attains a length of ten or even twelve feet. In a wild state the successive rows of palms, which mark the annual growth of the tree, wither and contract but remain upon the trunk, producing with every breath of wind the creaking sound

<sup>1</sup> The dates of Hassa and Oman may equal those of Busrah but the gardens are inferior and the quantity produced is not so large.

A DATE ORCHARD NEAR BUSRAH



DATES GROWING ON A DATE-PALM





so often heard in the silence of the desert-night. But where the palms are cultivated the old stems are cut away as fast as they dry and are put to many different uses. The trunk of the palm-tree therefore presents the appearance of scales which enable a man, whose body is held to the tree by a rope noose, to climb to the top with ease and gather the fruit. At a distance, these annual *rings* of the date-palm appear as a series of diagonal lines dividing the trunk. Palm-trees often reach the age of a hundred years. The date-palm is dioecious; but in Mesopotamia the pistillate-palms far exceed in number the staminate. Marriage of the palms takes place every spring and is a busy time for the husbandman as it is no small task to climb all the trees and sprinkle the pollen.

Arabs have written books and Europeans have composed fables on the thousand different uses of the palm-tree. Every part of this wonderful tree is useful to the Arabs in unexpected ways. To begin at the top:—The pistils of the date-blossom contain a fine curly fibre which is beaten out and used in all Eastern baths as a sponge for soaping the body. At the extremity of the trunk is a terminal bud containing a whitish substance resembling an almond in consistency and taste, but a hundred times as large. This is a great table delicacy. There are said to be over one hundred varieties of date-palm all distinguished by their fruit and the Arabs say that “a good housewife may furnish her husband every day for a month with a dish of dates differently prepared.” Dates form the staple food of the Arabs in a large part of Arabia and are always served in some form at every meal. Syrup and vinegar is made from old dates, and by those who disregard the Koran, even a kind of brandy. The date-pit is ground up and fed to cows and sheep so that nothing of the precious fruit may be lost. Whole pits are used as beads and counters for the Arab children in their games on the desert-sand. The branches or palms are stripped of their leaves and used like rattan, to make beds, tables, chairs, cradles, bird-cages, reading-stands, boats,

crates, etc., etc. The leaves are made into baskets, fans and string and the *bast* of the outer trunk forms excellent fibre for rope of many sizes and qualities. The wood of the trunk, though light and porous, is much used in bridge-building and architecture and is quite durable. In short, when a date-palm is cut down there is not a particle of it that is wasted. This tree is the "poor-house" and asylum for all Arabia; without it millions would have neither food nor shelter. For one half of the population of Mesopotamia lives in date-mat dwellings.

Although everywhere the date-culture is an important industry, Busrah is the centre of the trade, for here is the principal depot for export. The three best varieties of dates known at Busrah are the *Hallawi*, *Khadrawi* and *Sayer*. These are the only kinds that will stand shipping to the European markets. They are packed in layers in wooden boxes, or in smaller carton boxes. The average export to London and New York from Busrah for the past five years has been about 20,000 tons, nearly one half of which was for the American market. Other important varieties are *Zehdi*, *Bérem*, *Dery* and *Shukri*. These are packed more roughly in matting or baskets, and are sent along the whole Arabian coast, to India, the Red Sea littoral and Zanzibar. There are over thirty other varieties cultivated near Busrah for local consumption. Some of them have curious names such as: "Mother of Perfume," "Sealed-up," "Red Sugar," "Daughter of Seven," "Bride's-finger," "Little Star," "Pure Daughter"; others have names which it is better not to translate.

Palgrave and others, with whose verdict I agree, pronounced the *Khalasi* date of El Hassa superior to all other kinds. It has recently been introduced into Mesopotamia. Palgrave says, "the literal and not inappropriate translation of the name is 'quintessence' — a species peculiar to Hassa and easily the first of its kind." The fruit itself is rather smaller than the usual *Hallawi* date, but it is not so dry and far more

luscious. It is of a rich dark amber color, almost ruddy, and translucent; the kernel is small and easily detached, the date tastes sweet as sugar and is as far superior to the date bought in the American market as a ripe Pippin is to dried apple-rings.

At Busrah the date season opens in September and keeps every one busy until the vast harvest is gathered and shipped. The dates for export to Europe and America are of prime quality, a box of half a hundred-weight on board the steamer is worth about three or four shillings wholesale. All poor, wet, and small dates are packed separately in mats or bags, and are sent to India as second-quality. The poorest lot are sent in mass to the distilleries in England. Thus nothing is lost. Date-packers, who put the fruit in layers, receive three or four *kameris* for packing a box. The best packers can only pack four boxes a day, so that their wages are about a *kran* (about ten cents) per day. They live cheaply on the fruit, and bring all their family, babes and greybeards with them to lodge for the season in the date-gardens. The date season in Busrah begins in the early or middle part of September and lasts for six or eight weeks. The price of the date-crop varies. It is usually fixed at a meeting held in some date-garden where the growers and buyers play the bull and the bear until an agreement is reached. The prices in 1897 were, in the language of the trade: "340 Shamis for Hallawis, 280 Shamis for Khadrawis, and 180 Shamis for Sayer." Seventeen *Shamis* are equal to about one pound sterling, and the prices quoted are for a *kara*, about fifty hundred-weights.

The culture of the date has steadily increased for the past fifteen years. In 1896 the greater part of the country was inundated by heavy floods and over a million date-trees are said to have been destroyed; new gardens are being planted continually. The Arabs of Mesopotamia display great skill and unusual care in manuring, irrigating and improving their date-plantations, for they realize more and more that this is no mean source of wealth. One recent use to which export dates

are put is in the manufacture of vinegar, it would seem, since the beet-sugar industry has proved so profitable, that there must be some method by which good sugar could be manufactured from date-syrup.

Mesopotamia is rich not only in date-groves but in cereals, wool, gums, licorice root and other products. The export of wool alone in 1897 was valued at £288,700. And the total exports the same year, for the two provinces of Bagdad and Busrah, were put at £522,960. Busrah is the shipping place for all the region round about, and ocean steamers of considerable size are always in Busrah harbor, during 1897 four hundred and twenty-one sailing vessels and ninety-five steamships cleared the port, with a total tonnage of 131,846; ninety-one of the steamships were British.

The population of the two vilayets is given by Cunet, who follows Turkish authorities, as follows:

	<i>Moslems.</i>	<i>Christians.</i>	<i>Jews.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Bagdad Vilayet,	789,500	7,000	53,500	850,000
Busrah Vilayet,	939,650	5,850	4,500	950,000

In Bagdad vilayet nearly four-fifths of the Moslem population belongs to the Sunnite sect, while in Busrah vilayet three-fourths of them are Shiah. The Sabeans are generally reckoned among the Christians, although these are already sufficiently divided into Latin, Greek Orthodox, Greek, Syrian, Chaldean Catholic, Armenian Gregorian, Armenian Catholic and Protestants—the last in the smallest minority possible and the others chiefly distinguished by mutual distrust and united hatred of Protestantism.

The vilayet of Bagdad is divided again into three *Sandjaks* or districts of Bagdad, Hillah and Kerbela, and that of Busrah likewise into those of Busrah, Amara Muntefik and Nejd<sup>1</sup>. Of these six districts that of Bagdad is the largest in area and importance and is the centre of military power for both vilayets.

<sup>1</sup> The last named is outside of our present subject and is a misnomer given by Turkish audacity to the region of Hassa.

The boundaries of Bagdad Sandjak go as far as Anah on the Euphrates toward the north and include Kut-el-Amara on the south with both banks of the Tigris. Hillah and Kerbela are along the Euphrates with irregular boundaries while the Muntefik Sandjak with its provincial town of Nasariya separates them from that of Busrah. The Sandjak of Amara begins a few miles north of the junction of the two rivers, and the whole frontier toward Persia is entirely undefined or at least "*in litigation*," as the Turkish official maps have it.

The two Turkish provinces have all the involved machinery of Turkish civil and military administration. There are plenty of offices and office-holders and constant changes in both. Each province has a governor-general or *Wali* and (outside of the governor's sandjak) each district has its *mutaserrif-pasha* either of the first or second class—those one has to deal with generally prove to be of the latter. Then there are *Kaimakams* for smaller districts or cities, and finally *mudirs* for villages. At the seat of government, called the *Sera*, there is an administrative council, including the *Nàib* or *kadi*, corresponding to chief-justice; the *defterdar* or secretary of finance; the *mufti* or public interpreter of Moslem law; the *nakib*, etc., etc., etc. There are several courts of justice of different rank; the custom-house administration is on the *e pluribus unum* plan and *ne plus ultra* system. Besides these there are the "Regie des tabacs" or the tobacco-monopoly, the post and telegraph administration, the sanitary offices, the salt-inspectors, and, at Kerbela, the Tanf of corpses levied on imported pilgrims. To describe all these satisfactorily would require a volume.



### XIII

#### THE CITIES AND VILLAGES OF TURKISH-ARABIA

KUWEIT,<sup>1</sup> on the gulf a little south of the river delta, will in all probability—before long, rise in importance and be as well known as Suez or Port Said. It has the finest harbor in all Eastern Arabia, and is an important town of from 10,000 to 12,000 inhabitants. Here will probably be the terminus of the proposed railroads to bind India and the gulf to Europe by the shortest route. The whole country round about being practically desert, the place is entirely dependent on its trade for support. It possesses more bagalows (sailing-vessels) than any port in the gulf; is remarkably cleanly, has some very well-built houses and an extensive dockyard for boat building. The town and tribe are nominally under Turkish subjection, although protection is the better word, and it is rumored that Kuwait will soon be as much in the hands of the English as is Bahrein.

The Bedoun tribes of Northern Hassa, and even from Nejd, bring horses, cattle and sheep to this place to barter for dates, clothing and fire-arms. There is nearly always a large encampment of Bedouins near the town. The route overland from Kuwait to Busrah is across the desert until we come to an old artificial canal, leaving Jebel Sinam to the left the second march brings us to Zobeir, a small village on the site of ancient Busrah, and only a few hours to the present site. At Zobeir is

<sup>1</sup> Kuwait is the Arabic diminutive of *Kūt* a walled-village, the place is called Grane on some maps—evidently a corruption of *Kurein* or “little horn,” a name given to an island in the harbor.

the tomb of the Moslem leader for whom the town is named. The village contains about 400 houses, and the population is rich and fanatical. In the vicinity are gardens where a kind of melon is raised, which is celebrated in all the region round about for sweetness and delicacy of flavor. The journey from Kuwait to Busrah is generally made, even by natives, in bugallows, while the Persian Gulf steamers, not calling at Kuwait, proceed direct from Bushire to Fao, at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab. A great hindrance to commerce is the bar formed by the alluvial deposit of the immense river as it reaches the gulf. At low tide there is only ten feet of water in the deepest part of the channel, and even at flood tide large steamers must plow their way through the mud to reach Busrah.

Fao is of no importance except as the terminus of the cable from Bushire. A British telegraph station was established here in 1864. The Turkish telegraph system from up the rivers terminates at Fao, and here too they have a representative to govern the place and enforce stringent quarantine. The Shatt-el-Arab winds monotonously between the vast date-orchards or desert banks for about forty miles, until we reach the Karun river and the Persian town of Mohammerah. Busrah is sixty-seven miles from the bar and between it and Fao there are many important villages on each bank of the river. Aboo Hassib is perhaps the most important and is a great centre for date-culture and packing.

Busrah consists of the native city—containing the principal bazaars, the government house, and the bulk of the population—and the new town on the river. The native town is about two miles from the river on a narrow creek, called *Ashar*; a good road runs along the bank, and this road really unites the two parts of the city into one as it is lined with dwelling-houses for a large part of the way. Busrah has seen better days, but also worse. In the middle of the eighteenth century it numbered upward of 150,000 inhabitants. In 1825, it had diminished to 60,000; the plague of 1831 reduced it further by nearly

one-half, and after the plague of 1838, scarcely 12,000 inhabitants remained. In 1854, it is said to have had only 5,000 inhabitants. At present the place is growing yearly in population and importance in spite of misgovernment and ruinous taxation. It has every natural advantage over Bagdad, except climate, and will yet outstrip the city of the old caliphs, if Turkey's rule mends or ends. The present population of the city proper is given by Ottoman authorities at 18,000. Many ruins all over the plains and in the surrounding gardens tell of its former extent and splendor. At present the native town looks sadly dilapidated, and tells the story of neglect and decay. The unexampled filthiness of the streets and the undrained marshes in the environs make the place proverbially unhealthy. This unhygienic condition is not improved by the Ashar Creek being at the same time the common sewer and the common water supply for over one-half of the population. The wealthy classes send out boats to bring water from the river, but all the poorer people use the creek. Such are the results of an imbecile government which could easily drain the marshes and supply every one with great abundance of pure water.

Ancient Busrah, near the present site of Zobeir, was founded in 636 A. D., by the second Caliph Omar as a key to the Euphrates and Tigris. It reached great prosperity, and was the home of poetry and grammatical learning, as Bagdad was the centre of science and philosophy. After the twelfth century the city began to decay, and at the conquest of Bagdad by Murad IV, in 1638, this entire stretch of country fell into the hands of the Turks. Then the present city took the name of Busrah. Later it was in the hands of the Arabs and Persians, and from 1832 to 1840, Mohammed Ali was in possession. Under the rule of Midhat Pasha, governor-general of Bagdad, the city of Busrah arose in importance partly because of the Turkish Steam Navigation Company which he promoted. But it was a dream-life. English commerce and enterprise aroused the place thoroughly, and the whistle of steamships has kept it

awake ever since the Suez canal opened trade with Europe by way of the gulf <sup>1</sup>

In making the journey from Busrah to Bagdad the traveller has choice of two lines of river-steamers: the Ottoman service has six steamers and the English company three, but the latter are only allowed to use two by the Turkish government. For romance, discomfort and tediousness, choose the former; for all other reasons select the latter. I have tried both. The English steamers carry the mails to Bagdad and make weekly trips, four or five days being required for the journey up stream, and three days down, although when the water is low the journey may be long delayed. In bad or shallow places the steamers often discharge a part of their cargo, heave over the shallow part and load up again. Of course trade suffers and vast quantities of merchandise often lie for weeks at Busrah awaiting shipment. No steps are ever taken by the Ottoman government to counteract the great waste of water which flows into the marshes. In course of time, unless prevented, this waste will lead to the closing up of the main channel of the Tigris even as the Euphrates below Suk-es-Shiukh has become a marsh for lack of use.

The good Steamship *Meyndieh* with its kindly Captain Cowley, or the sister ship *Khalifah* lies at anchor just off the English Consulate, the blue-peter flies overhead and the decks are overcrowded with all sorts and conditions of men—Persians, Turks, Indians, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks,—baggage, bales, boxes, water-bottles—chickens, geese, sheep, horses, not to speak of the insect-population on which it is impossible to collect freight-charges. The steamers are somewhat after the type of the American river-steamers on the Mississippi; but no Mark Twain has yet arisen to immortalize them, although they afford an even more fertile theme. With a double deck and broad

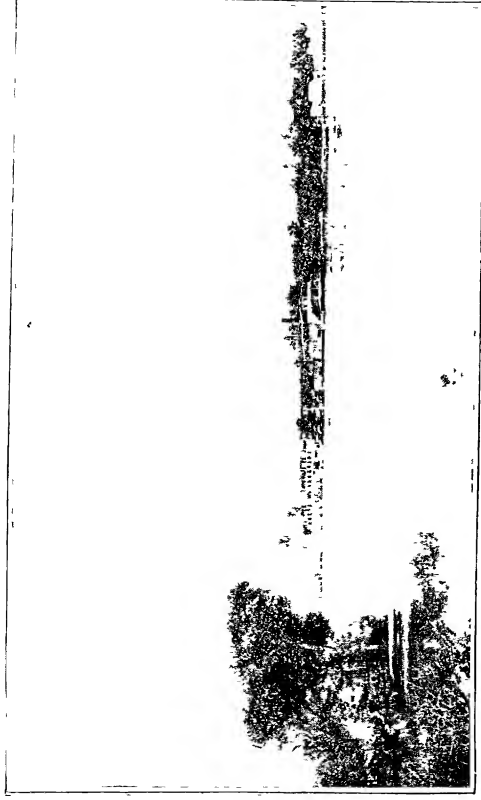
<sup>1</sup> For the interesting history of the cities that occupied the site of Busrah before the days of Islam, and as far back as Nebuchadnezzar, see Ainsworth's "Personal narrative of the Euphrates expedition."

of beam they carry hundreds of passengers and an astonishing amount of cargo for their size. The accommodation during cool weather is excellent, and during the hot days no one travels for the sake of luxury.

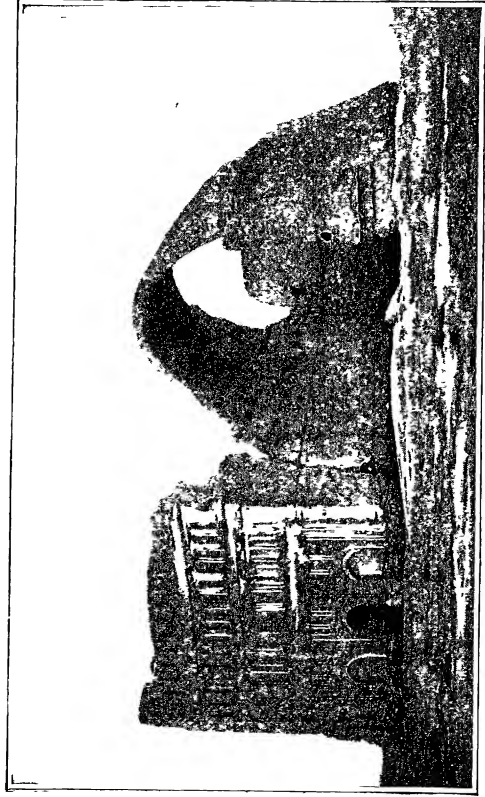
The first place at which the steamer calls is Kurna at the junction of the rivers, and from whence the course is up the Tigris to Bagdad. The Tomb of Ezra, about nine hours from Busrah, is a great place for pilgrimages by the Jews. It is a pretty spot on the river bank and picturesque with its crowd of embarking and disembarking Jews and Jewesses. The tomb is a domed cloister enclosing a square mausoleum, and paved with blue tiles. Over the doorway are two tablets of black marble with Hebrew inscriptions attesting to the authenticity of the tomb. It is not improbable that Ezra is buried here, for the Talmud states that he died at Zamzuma, a town on the Tigris. He is said to have died here on his way from Jerusalem to Susa to plead the cause of the captive Jews. Josephus says that he was buried at Jerusalem, but no Jew of Bagdad doubts that Ezra's remains rest on the Tigris.

Ten hours beyond, we pass also on the west bank, Abu Sadra, a tomb of an Arab saint marked only by a reed-hut and a grove of poplars. Next is Amara, a large and growing village with a coaling-depot and an enterprising population. This place was founded in 1861, and promises to become a centre of trade. After passing Ali Shergî, Ali Gherbi, and Sheikh Saad, small villages, without stopping, the steamer calls at Kut-el-Amara, a larger place even than Amara, on the east bank, with over 4,000 inhabitants.

All the way from Busrah to Bagdad, but especially along this part of the river, we pass Bedoun tribes, encamped in the black tents of Kedar, engaged in the most primitive agriculture or irrigation of their land, or rushing along the banks to hail the passing steamer. A hungry, impudent, noisy, cheerful lot they are, filling the merciful with pity and moving the thoughtless to laughter, as they scramble up and down the



THE REPUTED TOMB OF EZRA ON THE TIGRIS RIVER



RUINS OF THE ARCH OF CTESIPHON NEAR BAGDAD



banks into the water to catch a piece of bread or a few dates thrown to them.

Meanwhile we steam along passing Bughela, Azizieh, Bagdadieh and reach Bustani Kesra, or the arch of Ctesiphon. The little village of Soleiman-Pak is named for the pious man who was the private barber of Mohammed the prophet. After various wanderings, poor pious Pak was buried here, only a short distance from the great arch. A village sprang up near the tomb, pilgrims come from everywhere and miracles are claimed to be wrought by him who when alive only handled the razor. The whole region of Mesopotamia is more rich in saints, tombs and pilgrim-shrines than any other part of Arabia.

The arch of Ctesiphon is not a shrine but it is well worth a visit. It is the only prominent object that remains of the vast ruins of Ctesiphon on the east bank of the Tigris, and Seleucia on the west. The arch is now almost in ruins but must once have been the façade of a magnificent building. Its length is 275 feet, and its height is given variously as eighty-six or one hundred feet; the walls are over twelve feet thick and the span of the magnificent arch is nearly eighty feet. What Ctesiphon was in the days of the Sassanian kings we read in Gibbon. Now its glory has departed and the tomb of the Barber has more visitors than the ancient throne of the Chosroes. Eight hours after leaving Ctesiphon's ruins, our steamer is in full sight of the city of Haroun Rashid.

Bagdad is a familiar name even to the boy who reads the Arabian tales rather than his geography. It is one of the chief cities of the Turkish empire and has a history much older than the empire itself. Founded by the Caliph Mansur about the year 765 A D, it was the capital of the Mohammedan world for five hundred years, until it was destroyed by Halakn, grandson of Jengiz Khan. Situated in the midst of what was once the richest and most productive region of the old world it is now no longer queen of the land but rather reminds us of decay and dissolution. Its present beauties are only the ruins



of former glory. The untidy soldiers slouching about the streets, the evil-smelling bazaars and ruined mosques, the rotten budge of boats that spans the river, the faces of the poor and the miserable who go begging through the streets, indicate the curse of Turkish inanition and oppression.

On the west bank of the river is the old town enclosed by extensive orange and date-groves. On the east bank is New-Bagdad, which also looks old enough. Here are the government offices, consulates, and the chief commercial buildings as well as the custom-offices. Bagdad is still an important city on many accounts. No other city of the Turkish empire is influenced so much by the desert and Arabia as is Bagdad, and no other stands in such direct contact with the towns in the interior of the peninsula. The Arabic spoken is comparatively pure, and Bedouin manners still prevail in many ways in the social life of the people. The city has a very motley population, because of commerce on the one hand and the number of pilgrim-shrines on the other. The tombs of Abd-ul-Kadir, and Abu Hanifah and the gilded domes and minarets which mark the resting-places of two of the Shiah Imams—all draw their annual concourse of visitors from many lands and peoples. All the languages of the Levant are spoken on its streets although Arabic prevails over all. Dr. H. M. Sutton remarks, "I have been at the bedside of a patient where in a company of half-a-dozen people we had occasion to use five languages, and on another occasion we were in a company of about forty people in a room where no less than fourteen languages were represented. The land of Shinar is thus still the place of the confusion of tongues." Bagdad like Busrah has suffered greatly by ravages of the plague at various times, but especially in 1830 when the plague was followed by a fearful inundation. In one night, when the river burst its banks 7,000 houses fell and 15,000 people perished.

The population of Bagdad is at present variously estimated at from 120,000 to 180,000. Nearly one-third are Jews while

the Oriental Christians number about 5,000. The trade of Bagdad is large not only with the region southwards and toward Busrah but with Nejd and Northern Mesopotamia. The import trade from India and Europe to Bagdad is over £1,000,000 every year, and the export trade to Europe alone is placed at £522,960 for 1897. The river north of Bagdad is not navigable for steamers but an immense number of *kelleks* daily arrive from the north loaded with lumber from Kuidistan and with other products. These *kelleks* are a craft made of inflated goatskins boarded over with reeds and matting. The boatmen return with the empty skins overland with the caravan companies. Still more characteristic of Bagdad is the small river-boat called a *kuffe* or coracle. It consists of a perfectly circular hull, six to eight feet in diameter, with sides curving inward like a huge basket, and covered with pitch. This type of boat is as old as Nineveh and they are pictured quite accurately on the old monuments.

Bagdad has more than sixty-eight mosques, six churches and twenty-two synagogues. Of the mosques some, like that of Daood Pasha, are in fine condition; others are almost in ruins, and remind one of the remark of Lady Ann Blunt: "A city long past its prime, its hose a world too wide for its shrunk shanks." The feature of Bagdad is of course the river Tigris, with its swift-flowing tide ever washing the mud banks and watering the gardens for miles around. The houses come down close to the water's edge and some of them have pretty gardens almost overhanging the stream and terraces and verandas—oriental and picturesque. The British Residency is perhaps most beautiful in its location and its frontage on the river; but the other consulates vie with it in displaying to the traveller the strength and hospitality of European States. The European community is larger than at Busrah.

THROUGH the kind assistance of Colonel Mockler, at that time the Bagdad Consul General and Resident, in the autumn of 1892, I was able to make the journey from Bagdad across to Hillah and down the Euphrates—a route not often taken by the traveller. After making necessary preparations and finding a suitable servant we hired two mules and left the city of the old Caliphs with a caravan for Kerbela. It was in July and we made our first halt four hours from Bagdad, sleeping on a blanket under the stars. An hour after midnight the pack-saddles were lifted in place and we were off again. It was a mixed company, Arabs, Persians, and Turks; merchants for Hillah and pilgrims to the sacred shrines; women in those curtained, cage-like structures called *taht-i-vans*,—two portable zenanas hanging from each beast; dervishes on foot with green turbans, heavy canes and awful visages: and to complete the picture a number of rude coffins strapped cross-wise on pack-mules and holding the remains of some “true believers,” long since ready for the holy ground at Nejf (Nedjef).

The caravan travelled along the desert road mostly at night to escape the fearful heat of midday when we sought shelter in public khan. Nothing could be more uninteresting than the country between Bagdad and Babylon at this season of the year. The maps mark six khans on the route, but three of these are in ruins and the others are merely stages of a caravan rather than villages or centres of cultivation. The soil appears excellent, but there are no irrigation canals, and everything has a deserted appearance. A few low shrubs between the

mounds and moles of an ancient civilization; mud-houses near the khans and some Arab encampments, camel skeletons shining white by the wayside, under a burning sun, and a troop or two of gazelle making for the river-banks—that is all you see until you reach the palm-banked Euphrates at Hillah.

The khans consist of a large enclosure with heavy walls of sun-dried or Babylonian brick. In the interior are numerous alcoves or niches, ten by six feet and four feet above ground; you seek out an empty niche and find a resting-place until the caravan starts at midnight. In the centre of the enclosure is a well and a large platform for prayer—utilized for sleeping and cooking by late arrivals who find no niche reserved as in our case. The rest of the court is for animals and baggage. Usual Arab supplies were obtainable at these resting-places, but every comfort is scarce and the innkeepers are too busy to be hospitable.

Khan el Haswa where we arrived the second day is the centre of a small village of perhaps 300 people. At three in the morning we left Haswa but it was nearly noon when we reached the river, because of a delay on the road. The bazaar and business of Hillah were formerly on the Babylonian side of the stream, but are now principally on the further side of the rickety bridge of boats four miles below the ruins of Babylon. After paying toll we crossed over and found a room in the Khan Pasha—a close, dirty place, but in the midst of the town and near the river. Hillah is the largest town on the Euphrates north of Busiah. Splendid groves of date-trees surround it and stretch along the river as far as the eye can reach. The principal merchandise of the town is wheat, barley and dates. Of the Moslem population two-thirds are Shiah, and the remaining Sunni are mostly Turks. There are one or two native Christians and many Jews, but it is difficult to estimate correctly the population of Hillah or of any of the towns on the Euphrates. At Hillah the river is less than 200 yards wide and has a much more gentle flow than the Tigris at

Bagdad A short distance northwest of the town is Kerbela. It is only a village but the spot is visited by thousands of faithful Moslems every year who venerate the twelve Imams of the Shiah sect. Here is the tomb of Hosein the grandson of the prophet and the son of Ali whom they believe the true successor in the Caliphate. By living or dying here the Shiah devotee has nought to fear for the next world. So strong is this belief that many leave directions in their wills to be buried in this hallowed spot. Thousands of corpses are imported some even from India—after proper drying and salting—and are laid to rest in the sacred ground. Nejef, south of Hillah, is the place of Ali's martyrdom and is no less sacred for the living and the dead.

At Kerbela the manufacture of *torbas* is about the only industry. A *torbat* is a small piece of baked clay about two inches in length, generally round or oblong, with the names of Ali and Fatima rudely engraved on it. Made out of holy-ground, these are carried home by all pilgrims and are used by nearly every Shiah as a resting-place for the forehead in their prayer prostrations. According to all reports Kerbela is similar to Mecca in its loose morals and the character of its permanent population.

On July 31st we left Hillah and sailed down the river in a native boat similar to the "bellum" of Busrah, but without awning. The Euphrates is more muddy than the Tigris, and its course, though less sinuous, is broken here and there by shallow rapids.<sup>1</sup> We sailed all night and did not stop until we arrived at Diwaniyeh the following afternoon. Many of the villages on the way appeared to have a considerable population, date-groves were plentiful, and we passed two or three Mathhab or tombs of Arab Sheikhs, including that reputed to be Job's, "the greatest of all the sons of the East."

<sup>1</sup> The following are the villages and encampments between *Hillah* and *Diwaniyeh* El Ataj, Doulab, Dobleh, Kwaha, Saadeh, Tenhaia, Bir Amaneh, Allaj, Anameh, Hosein, Khagaan Sageer and Khagaan Kebir.

At Diwaniyeh I was directed to the Serai, or government-house, where the Muttaserif Pasha of Hillah was forcing taxes from the unwilling Arabs. I was kindly received, and, probably because of my passport, was entertained at the Pasha's table. Diwaniyeh has only a small population, and its importance is due to its wealth of palms and the wheat trade, which gives another opportunity for the government to establish a toll-bridge and custom-house.

The Arabs of this region are notorious for their piracy on native craft, and in 1836 they even attacked the English surveying expedition. So I left the place with a guard of two soldiers—Saadeh and Salim, who were as happy as their names. Patching their uniforms, asleep in the bottom of the boat, eating of our bread and dates, or polishing their rifles marked "*U. S. Springfield, Snider's Pat 1863,*" we reached Samawa safely. During the day we passed the hamlets Um Nejis, Abu Juwareeb, Rumeitha, and Sheweit. But the general scene was that of narrow morass channels branching out from the river, where forests of reeds half hid mat-huts and naked Arabs. These river tribes are not true nomads,<sup>1</sup> but live in one place, on fish and the products of the river buffalo. It is a strange sight to see a herd of large black cattle swimming across stream, pursued by shouting, swimming and swearing herdsmen. And this was once the home of Abraham, the friend of God.

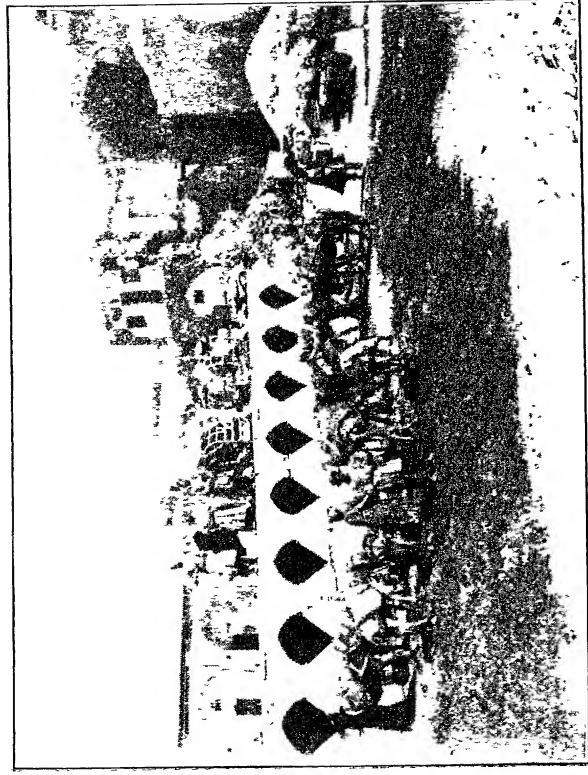
Near Rumeitha there was a large menzil of the Lamlum tribe. Here we fastened the boat for the night, as our company was afraid to cross certain rapids by starlight. Some of the Arabs came to our boat, armed with flint-locks and the Mikwar—a heavy stick knobbed with sandstone or hard bitumen—in Arab hands a formidable weapon. Most of the people

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between true Arabs of the nomad tribes and the *Me'dun* was made as early as 1792 by Niebuhr in his travels, and the river boatmen still answer your question with contemptuous accent: "Those are not Arabs, they are Me'dan."

were asleep, and we could get no supplies of any kind except two roast fowl from the Turkish garrison in a mud brick fort opposite. Even one of these fell to the share of a hungry jackal during the night. We left early in the morning, and after some difficulty in crossing the shallow rapids, reached Samawa in four hours. Dismissing the *zaptiehs*, we found a room in the Khan of Haj Nasir on the second floor and overlooking the bazaar.

It was the day before Ashera, the great day of Moharram, and the whole town was in funereal excitement. All shops were closed. Shiah were preparing for the great mourning, and Sunni sought a safe place away from the street. As soon as I came the local governor sent word that I must not leave the khan under any circumstances, nor venture in the street, as he would not be responsible for Shiah violence. I remained indoors, therefore, until the following day, and saw from the window the confusion of the night of Ashera, the tramp of a mob, the beating of breasts, the wailing of women, the bloody banners, and mock-martyr scenes, the rhythmic howling and cries of "Ya Ali! ya Hassan! ya Hussein!" until throats were hoarse and hands hung heavy for a moment, only to go at it again. A pandemonium, as of Baal's prophets on Carmel, before the deaf and dumb God of Islam,—monotheistic only in its book. "There is no god but God," and yet to the Shiah devotees of Moharram, "He is not in all their thoughts." The martyr caliphs of Nejf are their salvation and their hope, the Houris' lap.

Between Samawa and Nasariya, the next important town, we passed the villages: Zahara, El Kidr, Deij Kalat, (where there is a Turkish Mudir and a telegraph station on the Hillah-Busrah wire) Luptika El Ain Abu Tabr and El Assaniyeh. The river begins to broaden below Samawa, and its banks are beautiful with palms and willows. We were again delayed at a toll-bridge, there must be taxes everywhere in Turkey, on ships and on fishermen, on boats and on bridges, on tobacco



A PUBLIC KHAN IN TURKISH-ARABIA



ARAB PILGRIMS ON BOARD A RIVER STEAMER





and on salt ; but this taxing of the same cargo at every river port is peculiar.

Nasariya is a comparatively modern town and better built than any on the Euphrates river. Its bazaar is large and wide, and the government-houses are imposing for Arabdom. A small gunboat lies near the landing, and this floating tub, with its soldier guard and bugle-call, represents the only civilization that has yet come to the Euphrates valley, and is a thing of wonder to the Arabs. Opposite Nasariya are two large walled enclosures, wheat granaries protected from Arab robbers. Three hours west are the ruins of Mugheir—Ur of the Chaldees.

Our meheleh sailed down the river before daylight and five hours later came to Suk el Shiukh, "the bazaar of old men." Abd el Fattah, in whose Persian kahwah we found a place, is a cosmopolitan. He had seen "Franjees" before, had been to Bombay, Aden and Jiddah, knew something of books, a little less of the gospel, and spoke two English words, of which he was very proud, "Stop her" and "Send a geri." He was a model innkeeper, and had it not been for his tea and talk, the three days of stifling heat under a mat-roof would have been less tolerable.

South of Suk el Shiukh the river widens into marshes, where the channel is so shallow that part of the cargo of all river boats is transferred to smaller craft. On account of this delay, we ran short of provisions before reaching Kurna, and our boatmen were such prejudiced sectarians that it required argument and much backsheesh to bargain for some rice and the use of their cooking-pot. We were "nejis," "kafir," and what not, and the captain vowed he would have to wash the whole boat clean at Busrah from the footprints of the unbelievers. Between Suk and the junction of the two rivers to form the Shatt-el-Arab at Kurna, there are many wide, waste marshes, growing reeds and pasture for the buffalo—a breeding place for insect life and the terror of the boatmen because of the Me'dan

pirates. We were three days on this part of the river, and often all of us were in the water to lift and tug the boat over some mud-bank. El Kheit is the only village of any size the whole distance, but the Bedoun of the swamp, who live half the time in the water and have not arrived at even the loin-cloth stage of civilization, are a great multitude. At length we reached Kurna and thence, by the broad, lordly, Shatt-el-Arab to the mission-house at Busrah.

What is to be the future of this great and wealthy valley, which once supported myriads and was the centre of culture and ancient civilization? Will it evermore rest under the blight of the fez and the crescent? The one curse of the land is the inane government and its ruthless taxation. The goose with the golden egg is killed every day in Turkey—at least robbed to its last *nest-egg*. The shepherd-tribes, the villagers, the nomads, the agricultural communities, all suffer alike from the same cause. When and whence will deliverance come? Perhaps a partial reply to these two questions will be found if we read between the lines in our chapter on the recent politics of Arabia. A *Turkish* railroad in the Euphrates valley would rust, but a railroad under any other government would develop a region capable of magnificent improvement.

## XV

### THE INTERIOR—KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

“The central provinces of Nejd, the genuine Wahabî country, is to the rest of Arabia a sort of a lion’s den on which few venture and yet fewer return.”—*Palgrave*

“A desert world of new and dreadful aspect! black camels, and uncouth hostile mountains, and a vast sand wilderness shelving toward the dire impostor’s city.”—*Doughty*

THE region which, for want of a more definite name, we may call the Interior includes four large districts. Three of these have been comparatively well explored and mapped, but the fourth is utterly unknown. These districts are Roba’-el-Khalî, Nejran with Wady Dauasir, Nejd proper, and Jebel Shammar.

It is surprising that at the close of the nineteenth century there should remain so many portions of our globe still unexplored. We have better maps of the north pole and of the moon than we have of Southeastern Arabia and parts of Central Asia. A triangle formed by lines drawn from Harrara in Oman to El Harik in Southern Nejd, thence to Marib in Yemen and back to Harrara will measure very nearly 500 miles on each of its upper sides and 800 on the base. This triangle, with an area of 120,000 square miles is as utterly unknown to the world at large as if it were an undiscovered continent in some polar sea. Never has it been crossed by any European traveller or entered by an explorer. It includes all the *hinterland* of the Mahrah and Gharah tribes, all western Oman and the so-called Roba’-el-Khalî (literally, “empty abode”) of the Dahna desert, as well as that mysterious region of El Ahkaf to which

the Koran refers and which is said by the Arabs to be a sea of quicksands, able to swallow whole caravans.

On most maps the region in question is left blank, others designate it as an uninterrupted desert from Mecca to Oman; while Ptolemy's map describes the region as producing myrrh and abounding in Arab tribes and caravan-routes. Whatever we know of the country at present must be the result of Arab hearsay booked by travellers in the coast-provinces. The few names of places given in the Roba'-el-Khali would *not* lead one to suppose that "uninterrupted desert" was its only characteristic feature. In the north are Jebel Athal (the Tamarisk Mountains), and Wady Yebrin. Wady Shibwan and Wady Habuna seem to extend at least some distance into the triangle from the west, while, in the very centre we have the very unusual names for a desert region Belad-ez-Zohur (Flower-country) and El-Joz (the nut-trees). There is no doubt that a large part of the region is now desert and uninhabited; but it may not always have been so and may hold its own secrets, archæological and geographical.

An Arab of Wady Fatima told Doughty, what the divine partition of the world was in the following words: "Two quarters Allah divided to the children of Adam, the third part He gave to Gog and Magog, a manikin people, parted from us by a wall, which they shall overskip in the latter days; and then will they overrun the world. Of their kindred be the gross Turks and the misbelieving Persians; but you, the English are of the good kind with us. The fourth part of the world is called Roba'-el-Khali, the empty quarter." Doughty adds, "I never found any Arabian who had aught to tell, even by hearsay, of that dreadful country. Haply it is Nefud, with quicksands, which might be entered into and even passed with milch dromedaries in the spring weeks. Now my health failed me; otherwise I had sought to uniddle that enigma." It still awaits solution. In Oman they say it is only twenty-seven days' caravan march overland to Mecca right through

the desert; perhaps from the Oman highlands one could more easily penetrate into the unknown and get safely to Riad if not to Yemen.

Nejran, celebrated as an ancient Christian province of Arabia and sacred by the blood of martyrs, lies north of Yemen and east of the Asir country. Together with the Dauasir-Wady region it forms a strip of territory about 300 miles long and 100 broad, well-watered and even more fertile than the best parts of Yemen.<sup>1</sup> The intrepid traveller, Halévy (1870) first visited this region from Yemen and found a large Jewish population in the southern part. He visited the towns Mahlaf, Rijlah and Karyet-el-Kabil, penetrated Wady Habuna but could not succeed in reaching Wady Dauasir. He describes the fertility of the Wadys and the extensive date-plantations of this part of Arabia in terms of greatest admiration. Ruins and inscriptions are plentiful. In Wady Dauasir the Arabs say that the palm-groves extend three dromedary-journeys. The people are all agricultural Arabs but, as in Oman, they live in continual feud and turmoil because of tribal jealousies and old quarrels.

The region east of Wady Dauasir is called Aflaj or Felej-el-Aflaj, two days' journey distant, here there are also palm-oases. It is six days' journey thence to Riad, but the way is rugged, without villages.<sup>2</sup> It was along Wady Dauasir that I

<sup>1</sup> It contains the following Wadys: Nejran, Habuna, Wanan, Moyazet, Bedr and the extensive Wady Dauasir.

<sup>2</sup> Aflaj has six villages: Siyah, Leyta, Khurfa, El-Rautha, El-Bedia. Wady Dauasir has these towns: El-Hammam, Es-Shotibba, Es-Soleil, Tamera, Ed-Dam, El-Loghf, El-Ferîâ, Es Showeik, and El-Ayathat (Doughty). Most of these towns are not given on the maps, but as some of them are, it is interesting to mention the route from Hassa to this Wady, given by Capt. Miles in a letter to Sprenger (dated Muscat, March, 1873) and quoted in his "Alte Geog. Arabiens," page 240. "Route from El Hasa to Solail: Hassa, Kharaj, Howta, Hilwa, Leilah, Kharfa, Rondha, El Sih, Bida, Shitba, Solail. From Solail to Runniya it is three days' journey. It is a town larger than Solail. The Dosiri tribes are as fol-

had hoped to make the overland journey from Sana to Bahrein in 1894, once beyond Turkish espionage the way would have been open. According to the testimony of Halevy the inhabitants of Nejran and Wady Dauasir are not fanatical. Nowhere in Yemen are the Jews treated so kindly as by the Arabs of Nejran. This entire region must also be classed with the fertile districts of Arabia. Water is everywhere abundant coming down from the Jebel Rian, fifteen days' journey from Toweik and from the southern ranges of Jebel Ban and Jebel Tumra. The inhabitants of Nejran and of Southern Dauasir are heretical Moslems. They belong to the Bayadhī sect like the people of Oman,<sup>1</sup> and are supposed to be followers of Abd-Allah-bin-Abad (746 A. D.).

Historically, Nejran is of special interest because here it was that the Roman army of 11,000 men sent by Augustus Cæsar under Ælius Gallus to make a prey of the chimerical riches of Arabia Felix came to grief. The warriors did not fall in battle but, purposely misled by the Nabateans, their allies, they marched painfully over the waterless wastes in Central Arabia six months, the most perished in misery and only a remnant returned. Strabo, writing from the mouth of Gallus himself, who was his friend and prefect of Egypt, gives a description of the Arabian desert that cannot be improved: "It is a sandy waste with only a few palms and pits of water. the acacia thorn and the tamarisk grow there; the wandering Arabs lodge in tents and are camel graziers."

Nejd—the heart of Arabia, the genuine Arabia, the Arabia of the poets—is properly bounded,—on the east, by the Turkish province of Hasa; on the south by the border of the desert

lows El-Woodaieen at Solail, El Misahireh possess most camels, etc., Al Hassan at Wasit, Beni Goweit, El-Khutian in Shitba, El Sherafa, El-'Umoor, east end of Wady, Al Saad, west of Wady, El-Showaiej, El-Khamaseen, El Kahtan, Hamid, Al Amar, El Faijan in Khaifa."

<sup>1</sup>A full account of their peculiar beliefs and their disputed origin is given in the Appendix to Badger's "History of Oman"

near Yemama, on the west by Hejaz in its widest extent to Kharbar; and on the north by Jebel Shammar. Thus defined it includes the regions of El-Kasim, El-Woshem, El-Aared, and Yemama. The "Zephyrs of Nejd" are the pregnant theme of many an Arab poet and in these highlands that the air is crisp and dry and invigorating, especially to the visitors from the hot and moist coast provinces. It was such a poet who wrote in raptures of the Nejd climate:

"Then said I to my companion while the camels were hastening  
To bear us down the pass between Menifah and Demar.  
'Enjoy while thou canst the sweets of the meadows of Nejd,  
With no such meadows and sweets shalt thou meet after this evening.'  
Ah! heaven's blessing on the scented gales of Nejd,  
And its greensward and groves glittering from the spring showers;  
And thy dear friends when thy lot was cast in Nejd —  
Months flew past, they passed and we knew not,  
Nor when their moons were new nor when they waned "

As to the real and prosaic features of the country, Nejd is a plateau of which Jebel Toweyk is the centre and backbone. Its general height above the sea is about 4,000 feet, but there are more lofty ledges and peaks, some as high as 5,500 feet. These highlands are for the most clothed with fine pasture; trees are common, solitary or in little groups; and the entire plateau is intersected by a maze of valleys cut out of the sandstone and limestone. In these countless hollows is concentrated the fertility and the population of Nejd. The soil of the valleys is light, mixed with marl sand and pebbles washed down from the cliffs. Water is found everywhere in wells at a depth of not much over fifteen feet and often less; in Kasim it has a brackish taste, and the soil is salty, but in other parts of Nejd there are traces of iron in it. The climate of all Nejd, according to Palgrave, is perhaps one of the healthiest in the world. The air is dry, clear and free from all the malarial poison of the coast, the summers are warm but not sultry, and the winter air is biting cold. The usual monotony of an



Arabian landscape is not only enlivened by the presence of the date-palm near the villages, but by groups of 'Talh, Nebaa' and Sidr, the Ithl and Ghada Euphorbia—all of them good-sized shrubs or trees <sup>1</sup>

Nejd is pasture land, so that its breed of sheep are known all over Arabia, their wool is remarkably fine, almost equal to Cashmere in softness and delicacy. Camels abound; according to Palgrave, Nejd is "a wilderness of camels." The color is generally brownish white or grey; black camels are found westward and southward in the inhospitable Harra-country toward Mecca. Oxen and cows are not uncommon. Game is plenty, both feathered and quadruped. Partridges, quail, a kind of bustard; gazelle, hares, jerboa, wild-goat, wild-boars, porcupine, antelope, and a kind of wild-ox (*wathyh*) with beautiful horns. Snakes are not common, but lizards, centipedes and scorpions abound. The ostrich is also found in western Nejd as well as in Wady Dauasir. The Bedouin hunt them to sell the skins to the Damascus feather merchants who come down with the Haj every year to Mecca; forty reals (dollars) was the price paid in Doughty's time for a single skin—a small fortune to the poor nomad. Mounted on their dromedaries they watch for the bird and then waylay it, matchlock ready to hand. The Arabs esteem the breast of the ostrich good food; the fat is a sovereign remedy with them and half a *finjan* (the measure of an Arab coffee-cup), is worth half a Turkish mejdie. The ostrich is no longer as common in Arabia as formerly, and in many parts of the peninsula the bird is unknown even by name.

Nejd is a land of camels and horses. But although a fine breed of the latter exist it is a common mistake to suppose that horses are plentiful in Central Arabia and that every Arab owns

<sup>1</sup> The Talh is a large tree of roundish, scanty, leafage, with a little dry berry for fruit, its branches are wide-spreading and thorny. The Nebaa' is much smaller though of considerable height; it has very small ovate bright green leaves. The Sidi is a little acacia tree.

his steed. Doughty says "there is no breeding or sale of horses at Boreyda or Aneyza nor any town in Nejd." Most of the horses shipped from Busrah or Kuweit to Bombay are not from Nejd, although originally of Nejd-breed, but come from Jebel Shammar and the Mesopotamian valley. He who would know all about the beauty of the Nejd horse must visit the Hail stables with Palgrave who "goes raving mad" about the animals; or he can read Lady Ann Blunt's "Pilgrimage to Nejd" in search of horses; better still let him buy that remarkable book by Colonel Tweedie: *THE ARABIAN HORSE, His country and His people*. In this volume the horse is the hero and Arabs are grooms and stable-boys. The Arab is more kind to his horse than to any other animal. No Arab dreams of tying up a horse by the neck, a tether replaces the halter, one of the animal's hind-legs being encircled about the pastern by a light iron ring or leather strap, and connected with a chain or rope to an iron peg. Nejd horses are specially valuable for great speed and endurance. They are all built for riding and not for draught, to the unprofessional eye they do not seem at all superior to the best horses seen in London or New York City, but I leave the matter to the authorities mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For our present knowledge of the government, population, cities and villages of Nejd we are chiefly indebted to the following travellers Captain G F Sadlier, of the English army, who was the first European to cross the Arabian Peninsula. (1819) George Wallin, a learned young Swedish Arabist, travelling in 1845 and 1848 as a Mohammedan doctor of law, passed through the northern desert from Jaufr to Hail and visited Medina. William Gifford Palgrave, a Jesuit Roman Catholic, of English birth and scholarly tastes made his celebrated journey across Arabia from west to east in 1862-63. In 1864 the bold Italian traveller Guarmani went from Jerusalem straight to Jebel Shammar and Aneyza. In 1865 Colonel Pelly, the British Resident at Bushra made an important journey, in company with Dr Colville and Lieutenant Dawes, from Kuweit through southeastern Nejd to Riadh, returning by Hassa to Ojeil and Bahrein. Then Charles M Doughty (*facile princeps* among all authorities and travellers Arabian) made his long, arduous, zigzag journeys through northwestern

The government of Nejd indicates what the independent rulers of Arabia are like. Doughty testifies that the sum of all he could learn from the mouth of the Arabs themselves of Ibn Rashid's government (now in the hands of Abd-el-Aziz bin Mitaab, his nephew) was this: "He makes sure of them that may be won by gifts, he draws the sword against his adversaries, he treads down them that fear him and he were no right ruler, hewed he no heads off!" Some of the nomads consider the prince of Nejd a tyrant, but the villagers generally are well content. Forsooth it is better for them to have *one* tyrant than *many*, as in the days before the political upheaval that unified central Arabia. Other of the more religious folk of Nejd cannot forget the bloody path by which Ibn Rashid gained his seat of power and call him "*Nejis*, (poluted), a cutter-off of his kinsfolk with the sword."

Lavish sums in the eyes of the starved Bedouin are spent on hospitality but all guests are pleased and depart from the pile of rice to praise God and the Amir of Nejd. Daily, in the guest-room, according to Doughty, one hundred and eighty messes of barley-bread with rice and butter are served to the men freely, a camel or smaller animal is killed for the first-class guests and the total expense of his famous hospitality is not over £1,500 annually. The revenues are immense and Ibn Rashid's private fortune had grown large even when Doughty visited him in 1877. He has cattle innumerable and "40,000 camels"; some 300 blooded mares and 100 horses; over 100 negro slaves; besides private riches laid up in silver metal, land at Hail and plantations in Jauf.

Contrasted with the Turkish provinces of Arabia the subjects of the Amir of Nejd enjoy light taxation and even the Bedouin warriors who are in the service of the Nejd ruler receive better wages than the regular troops of the Sultan. From the description of northern Arabia from November, 1876, to August, 1878. Our other authority for Nejd is Lady Ann Blunt who with her husband visited the capital of Ibn Rashid's country from Bagdad in 1883.

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tion of Mr. and Mrs. Blunt and Doughty at Hail, one cannot but feel that the government of Nejd is much more liberal and less fanatical than it was in the old days of the Wahabîs as described by Palgrave. The old Wahabî power is now broken forever and Nejd is getting into touch with the world through commerce. Kasim already resembles the border-lands and the inhabitants are worldly-wise with the wisdom of the Bombay horse-dealers. Many of the youth of Nejd visit Bagdad, Busrah and Bahrein in their commercial ventures. Says Doughty, "all Nejd Arabia, east of Teyma, appertains to the Persian Gulf traffic and not to Syria [as does western Nejd]: and therefore the foreign color of Nejd is Mesopotamian." He marvelled at the erudition of the Nejd Arabs in spite of their isolation until he found that even here newspapers had found their way in recent years. English patent medicines are sold in the bazaar of Aneyza and the Arabs are somewhat acquainted with the wonders of Bombay and Calcutta. Palgrave found the inhabitants of Kasim and southern Nejd far more intelligent than those of the north. Except for the four large towns of Hail, Riad, Boreyda and Aneyza, Nejd has no large centres of population. Bedoun tribes are found everywhere and villagers cultivate the fertile oases even in the desert; but the population is not as dense as in Oman or Yemen nor even as in Nejran and Wady Dauasir.

Hail, the present capital of Nejd, may have a population of ten thousand within its walls. It lies east of Jebel Aja, a granite range 6,000 feet high ending abruptly at this point. The city is on a table-land 3,500 feet above the sea. The Amir's castle is a formidable stronghold occupying a position of immense natural strength in the Jebel Aja. Blunt visited this place in 1878, but does not give its exact site, "lest the information might be utilized by the Turks under possible future contingencies." We have three pen-pictures of Hail: that of Palgrave who drew a plan of the city; the description of Doughty with his plan of the Amir's residence and

guest-house, and the sketches of Lady Ann Blunt on her pilgrimage. It is a walled town with several gates, a large market-place, the palaces overtopping all and mosques sufficient for the worshippers. It is a clean, well-built town, according to Doughty and pleasant to live in save for the awe of the tyrant-ruler. Its circuit may be nearly an hour, in the centre of the walled enclosure stands the palace; near it the great mosque and directly opposite the principal bazaar. The great coffee-hall where the Amīr gives his audiences is eighty feet long with lofty walls and of noble proportions. It has long rows of pillars "upholding the flat roof of ethel timbers and palm-stalk mat-work, goodly stained and varnished with the smoke of the daily hospitality. Under the walls are benches of clay overspread with Bagdad carpets. By the entry stands a mighty copper-tinned basin or 'sea' of fresh water with a chained cup, from thence the coffee-server draws and he may drink who thirsts. In the upper end of this princely *kahwa* (coffee-house) are two fire-pits, like shallow graves, where desert bushes are burned in colder weather; they lack good fuel, and fire is blown commonly under the giant coffee-pots in a clay hearth like a smith's furnace."

The palace castles are built in Nejd with battled towers of clay-brick and whitened on the outside with *jiss* or plaster; this in contrast with the palm-gardens in the walled-enclosure give the town a bright, fresh aspect. Outside the walls, the contrast of the Bedouin squalor and the rusty black basalt rocks lying in rough confusion is intense. Hail lies in the midst of a barren country and is an oasis not by nature but by the pluck and perseverance of its founders. The Shammar Arabs settled here from antiquity and the place is mentioned in the ancient poem of Antar.

*Er-Riadh* or Riad (the "gardens-in-the-desert") was the Wahabī metropolis of Eastern Nejd and of all the Wahabī empire. The city lies in the heart of the Aared country, enclosed north and south by Jebel Toweyk and about 280 miles southeast of Hail. It is a large place (according to Palgrave of

30,000 population <sup>1</sup>), but nothing is known of its present state, as no European traveller has visited it since Palgrave. The general appearance of Riad, according to our guide is like that of Damascus. "Before us stretched a wide open valley, and in its foreground, immediately below the pebbly slope on whose summit we stood, lay the capital, large and square, crowned by high towers and strong walls of defence, a mass of roofs and terraces, where, overtopping all, frowned the huge but irregular pile of Feysul's royal castle, and hard by it rose the scarce less conspicuous palace, built and inhabited by his eldest son, Abdallah. All around for full three miles over the surrounding plain, but more especially to the west and south, waved a sea of palm-trees above green fields and well-watered gardens; while the singing, droning sound of the water-wheels reached us even where we had halted at a quarter of a mile or more from the nearest town-walls. On the opposite side southward, the valley opened out into the great and even more fertile plains of Yemama, thickly dotted with groves and villages, among which the large town Manhufah, hardly inferior in size to Riad itself, might be clearly distinguished . . . In all the countries which I have visited, and they are many, seldom has it been mine to survey a landscape equal to this in beauty, and in historical meaning, rich and full alike to the eye and the mind. The mixture of tropical aridity and luxuriant verdure, of crowded population and desert tracts, is one that Arabia alone can present, and in comparison with which Syria seems tame and Italy monotonous." <sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly the population of Riad has diminished since the seat of government was transferred to Hail; at present it has even less trade and importance than Hof hoof (Hassa) since the Turkish occupation.

<sup>1</sup> If we remember that Palgrave compares Feysul's mud brick palace to the Tuileries of Paris, states that the great mosque of Riad can accommodate 2,000 worshippers, and gives the Wahabi ruler a standing army of 50,000, we deduct a little from the poetical description to have a balance of net facts.

JEBEL SHAMMAR and the northwestern desert, remain to be considered. The chief characteristics of this region are the extensive *Nefuds* or sandy-deserts and the nomad population. Jebel Shammar more than any part of Arabia is the tenting ground for the sons of Kedar. Everywhere are the black-worsted booths—the houses of goat-hair, so celebrated in Arabic poetry and song. Place-names on the map of this country are not villages or cities but watering-places for cattle and encampments of the tribes from year to year. From the Gulf of Akaba to the Euphrates, and as far north as their flocks can find pasture, the nomads call the land their own. Many of them are subject to the government of Nejd and pay a small annual tribute; some are nominally under Turkish rule and others know no ruler save their Sheikh and have no law save that of immemorial Bedouin custom.

Burckhardt discourses of these people like one who has dwelt among them, tasting the sweet and bitter of their hungry, homely life. He describes their tents and their simple furniture, arms, utensils, diet, arts, industry, sciences, diseases, religion, matrimony, government, and warfare. He tells of their hospitality to the stranger, their robbery of the traveller; their blood-revenge and blood-covenants, their slaves and servants; their feasts and rejoicings, their domestic relations and public functions; their salutations and language; and how at last they bury their dead in a single garment, scraping out a shallow grave in hard-burned soil and heaping on a few rough stones to keep away the foul hyenas.

Burckhardt devotes a considerable portion of his book to an enumeration of the Bedouin-tribes and their numerous subdivisions. These will prove of great service to those who visit or cross the northern part of the Peninsula. The most important tribe is that of the *Anaeze*. They are nomads in the strictest acceptation of the word, for they continue during the whole year in almost constant motion. Their summer quarters are near the Syrian frontiers and in winter they retire into the

heart of the desert or toward the Euphrates. When the tents are few they are pitched in a circle and called *dowar*, in greater numbers, they encamp in rows, one behind the other, especially along a rivulet or wady-bed ; such encampments are called *Nezel*. The Sheikh's or chief's tent has the principal place generally toward the direction whence guests or foes may be expected. The Anaeze tents are always of black goat's-hair ; some other tribes have stuff striped white and black. Even the richest among them never have more than one tent unless he happen to have a second wife who cannot live on good terms with the first, he then pitches a smaller tent near his own. But polygamy is very unusual among the Bedouin Arabs, although divorce is common. The tent furniture is simplicity itself ; camel-saddles and cooking utensils with carpets and provision skins, are all the Arab housewife has to look after.

Since the days of Job the Bedouin have been a nation of robbers. "The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them ; and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away, yea they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword." (Job i 14.) The Bedouin's hand is against every man in all Jebel Shammar to this day. The tribes are in a state of almost perpetual war against each other ; it seldom happens, according to Burckhardt, that a tribe enjoys a moment of general peace with all its neighbors, yet the war between two tribes is not of long duration. Peace is easily made and easily broken. In Bedouin parlance a salt covenant is only binding while the salt is in their stomachs. General battles are rarely fought, and few lives are lost ; to surprise an enemy by sudden attack, or to plunder a camp, are the chief objects of both parties. The dreadful effects of "blood-revenge" (by which law the kindred of the slain are in duty bound to slay the murderer or his kin) prevent many sanguinary conflicts. Whatever the Arabs take in their predatory excursions is shared according to previous agreement. Sometimes the whole spoil is equally



divided by the Sheikh among his followers, at other times each one plunders for himself. A Bedouin raid is called a *ghazu*, and it is worthy of remark that the earliest biographer of Mohammed, Ibn Ishak, so designates the wars of the prophet of God with the Koreish. The Anaeze Bedouin never attack by night, for during the confusion of a nocturnal assault the women's apartments might be entered, and this they regard as treachery. The female sex is respected even among the most inveterate enemies whenever a camp is plundered, and neither men, women nor slaves are ever taken prisoners. It is war only for booty. The Arabs are robbers, seldom murderers; to ask protection or *dakheil* is sure quarter, even when the spear is lifted. Peace is concluded generally by arbitration in the tent of the Sheikh of a third tribe friendly to both combating tribes. The most frequent cause of war is quarrels over wells or watering-places and pasture grounds, just as in the days of the patriarchs.

"The Bedouins have reduced robbery," says Burckhardt, "in all its branches to a complete and regular system, which offers many interesting details." These details are very numerous, and the stories of robbery and escape given by the Arabian chroniclers, or told at the camp-fires, would fill a volume. One example will suffice us. Three robbers plan an attack on an encampment. One of them stations himself behind the tent that is to be robbed, and endeavors to excite the attention of the nearest watch-dogs. These immediately attack him; he flies, and they pursue him to a great distance from the camp, which is thus cleared of those dangerous guardians. The second robber goes to the camels, cuts the strings that confine their legs and makes as many rise as he wishes. He then leads one of the she-camels out of the camp, the others following as usual, while the third robber has all this time been standing with lifted club before the tent-door to strike down any one who might awake and venture forth. If the robbers succeed they then join their companion, each seizes the tail of

a strong leading-camel and pulls it with all his might, the camels set up a gallop into the desert and the men are dragged along by their booty until safe distance separates them from the scene of robbery. They then mount their prey and make haste to their own encampment

Before we lightly condemn the robber we must realize his sore need. According to Doughty and other travellers three-fourths of the Bedoun of Northwestern Arabia suffer continual famine and seldom have enough to eat. In the long summer drought when pastures fail and the gaunt camel-herds give no milk they are in a sorry plight; then it is that the housewife cooks her slender mess of rice secretly, lest some would-be guest should smell the pot. The hungry gnawing of the Arab's stomach is lessened by the coffee-cup and the ceaseless "tobacco-drinking" from the nomad's precious pipe. The women suffer most and children languish away. When one of these sons-of-desert heard from Doughty's lips of a land where "we had an abundance of the blessings of Allah, bread and clothing and peace, and, how, if any wanted, the law succored him—he began to be full of melancholy, and to lament the everlasting infelicity of the Arabs, whose lack of clothing is a cause to them of many diseases, who have not daily food nor water enough, and wandering in the empty wilderness, are never at any stay—and these miseries to last as long as their lives. And when his heart was full, he cried up to heaven, 'Have mercy, ah Lord God, upon Thy creature which Thou createdst—pity the sighing of the poor, the hungry, the naked—have mercy—have mercy upon them, O Allah!'"

As we bid farewell to the tents of Kedar and the deserts of North Arabia let us say amen to the nomad's prayer and judge them not harshly in their misery lest we be judged.

## "THE TIME OF IGNORANCE"

"The religious decay in Arabia shortly before Islam may well be taken in a negative sense, in the sense of the tribes losing the feeling of kinship with the tribal gods. We may express this more concretely by saying that the gods had become gradually more and more nebulous through the destructive influence exercised, for about two hundred years, by Jewish and Christian ideas, upon Arabian heathenism"—*H Hirschfeld*, in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society."

**I**N order to understand the genesis of Islam we must know something of the condition of Arabia before the advent of Mohammed. We shall then be able to discover the factors that influenced the hero-prophet and made it possible for him so powerfully to sway the destinies of his own generation and those that were to follow.

Mohammedan writers call the centuries before the birth of their Prophet *wakt-el-jahiliyeh*—"the time of ignorance"—since the Arabs were then ignorant of the true religion. These writers naturally chose to paint the picture of heathen Arabia as dark as possible, in order that the "Light of God," as the prophet is called, might appear more bright in contrast. Following these authorities Sale and others have left an altogether wrong impression of the state of Arabia when Mohammed first appeared. The commonly accepted idea that he preached entirely new truth and uplifted the Arabs to a higher plane of civilization is only half true.<sup>1</sup>

No part of Arabia has ever reached the high stage of civilization under the rule of Islam which Yemen enjoyed under its Christian or even its Jewish dynasties of the Himyarites.

<sup>1</sup> In our chapter on the Arabic language we shall see that the golden age of Arabic literature was just before the birth of Mohammed.

Early Christianity in Arabia, with all its weakness, had been a power for good. The Jews had penetrated to nearly every portion of the peninsula long before Mohammed came on the scene.<sup>1</sup>

In the "Time of Ignorance" the Arabs throughout the peninsula were divided into numerous local tribes or clans which were bound together by no political organization but only by a traditional sentiment of unity which they believed, or feigned to believe, a unity of blood. Each group was a unit and opposed to all the other clans. Some were pastoral and some nomadic; others like those at Mecca and Taif were traders. For many centuries Yemen had been enriched by the incense-trade and by its position as the emporium of Eastern commerce. Sprenger in his ancient geography of the peninsula says that: "The history of the earliest commerce is the history of incense and the land of incense was Arabia." The immense caravan trade which brought all the wealth of Ormuz and Ind to the West, must have been a means of civilization to the desert. The tanks of Marib spread fertility around and the region north of Sana was intersected by busy caravan-routes. W. Robertson Smith goes so far as to say that "In this period the name of Arab was associated to Western writers with ideas of effeminate indolence and peaceful opulence . . . the golden age of Yemen."

<sup>1</sup> "Mohammedanism had owed much to the Jewish kingdom of Saba. The rule of the Sabeian kings had extended over Mecca, and Jewish ideas and beliefs had thus made their way into the future birthplace of Mohammed. The fact is full of interest for students of the history of Islam. The epigraphic evidence which Dr. Glaser has presented to us shows that the rise of Mohammedanism was not the strange and unique phenomenon it has hitherto been thought to be. It had been prepared for centuries previously. Arabia had for ages been the home of culture and the art of writing, and for about two hundred years before the birth of Mohammed his countrymen had been brought into close contact with the Jewish faith. Future research will doubtless explain fully how great was his debt to the Jewish masters of Mecca and the Sabeian kingdom of Southern Arabia."—Prof. A. H. Sayce in the *Independent*.

The Arabs had enjoyed for several thousand years, an almost absolute freedom from foreign dominion or occupation. Neither the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the ancient Persians nor the Macedonians in their march of conquest ever subjugated or held any part of Arabia. But before the coming of the Prophet the proud freemen of the desert were compelled to bend their necks repeatedly to the yoke of Roman, Abyssinian and Persian rulers. In A. D. 105, Trajan sent his general, Cornelius Palma, and subdued the Nabathean kingdom of North Arabia. Mesopotamia was conquered and the eastern coast of the peninsula was completely devastated by the Romans in A. D. 116. Hira yielded to the monarchs of Persia as Ghassan did to the generals of Rome. Sir William Muir writes, "It is remarked even by a Mohammedan writer that the decadence of the race of Ghassan was preparing the way for the glories of the Arabian prophet." In other words Arabia was being invaded by foreign powers and the Arabs were ready for a political leader to break these yokes and restore the old-time independence. Roman domination invaded even Mecca itself not long before the Hegira. "For shortly after his accession to the throne, A. D. 610, the Emperor Heraclius nominated Othman, then a convert to Christianity, . . . as governor of Mecca, recommending him to the Koreishites in an authoritative letter."<sup>1</sup> The Abyssinian wars and invasions of Arabia during the century preceding Mohammed are better known. Their dominion in Yemen, says Ibn Ishak, lasted seventy-two years, and they were finally driven out by the Persians, at the request of the Arabs.

Arabia was thus the centre of political schemes and plots just at the time when Mohammed came to manhood, the whole peninsula was awake to the touch of the Romans, Abyssinians and Persians, and ready to rally around any banner that led to a national deliverance.

As to the position of women in this "Time of Ignorance."

<sup>1</sup> Koelle's Mohammed, p. 5.

the cruel custom of female infanticide prevailed in many parts of heathen Arabia. This was probably due, in the first instance, to poverty or famine, and afterward became a social custom to limit population. Professor Wilken suggests as a further reason that wars had tended to an excess of females over males. An Arab poet tells of a niece who refused to leave the husband to whom she had been assigned after capture. Her uncle was so enraged that he buried all his daughters alive and never allowed another one to live. Even one beautiful girl who had been saved alive by her mother was ruthlessly placed in a grave by the father and her cries stifled with earth. This horrible custom however was not usual. We are told of one distinguished Arab, named *Saa-Saa*, who tried to put down the practice of "digging a grave by the side of the bed on which daughters were born."

Mohammed improved on the barbaric method and discovered a way by which not some but *all* females could be buried alive without being murdered—namely, the veil. Its origin was one of the marriage affairs of the prophet with its appropriate revelation from Allah. *The veil was unknown in Arabia before that time*. It was Islam that forever withdrew from Oriental society the bright, refining, elevating influence of women. Keene says that the veil "lies at the root of all the most important features that differentiate progress from stagnation." The harem-system did not prevail in the days of idolatry. Women had rights and were respected. In two instances, beside that of Zenobia, we read of Arabian *queens* ruling over their tribes. Freytag in his Arabian Proverbs gives a list of female judges who exercised their office in the "time of ignorance." According to Nöldeke, the Nabathean inscriptions and coins prove that women held an independent and honorable position in North Arabia long before Islam; they constructed expensive family graves, owned large estates, and were independent traders. The heathen Arabs jealously watched over their women as their most valued possession and

defended them with their lives. A woman was never given away by her father in an unequal match nor against her consent. "If you cannot find an equal match," said Ibn Zohair to the Namir, "the best marriage for them is the grave." Professor G. A. Wilken<sup>1</sup> adduces many proofs to show that women had a right in every case to choose their own husbands and cites the case of Khadijah who offered her hand to Mohammed. Even captive women were not kept in slavery, as is evident from the verses of Hatim :

"They did not give us Taites, their daughters in marriage;  
But we wooed them against their will with our swords.  
And with us captivity brought no abasement.  
They neither toiled making bread nor made the pot boil;  
But we mingled them with our women, the noblest,  
And bare us fair sons, white of face."

Polyandry and polygamy were both practiced; the right of divorce belonged to the wife as well as to the husband; temporary marriages were also common. As was natural among a nomad race, the marriage bond was quickly made and easily dissolved. But this was not the case among the Jews and Christians of Yemen and Nejrán. Two kinds of marriage were in vogue. The *mota'a* was a purely personal contract between a man and woman; no witnesses were necessary and the woman did not leave her home or come under the authority of her husband; even the children belonged to the wife. This marriage, so frequently described in Arabic poetry, was not considered illicit but was openly celebrated in verse and brought no disgrace on the woman. In the other kind of marriage, called *nikah*, the woman became subject to her husband by capture or purchase. In the latter case the purchase-money was paid to the bride's kin.

The position of women before Islam is thus described in

<sup>1</sup> Het Matriarchaat bij de oude Arabieren (1884), and *Supplement* to the same, in answer to critics, (1885). The Hague.

Smith's "Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia" "It is very remarkable that in spite of Mohammed's humane ordinances the place of woman in the family and in society has steadily declined under his law. In ancient Arabia we find . . . many proofs that women moved more freely and asserted themselves more strongly than in the modern East. . . . The Arabs themselves recognized that the position of woman had fallen . . . and it continued still to fall under Islam, because the effect of Mohammed's legislation in favor of women was more than outweighed by the establishment of marriages of dominion as the one legitimate type, and by the gradual loosening of the principle that married women could count on their own kin to stand by them against their husbands."<sup>1</sup>

In "the time of ignorance" writing was well known and poetry flourished. Three accomplishments were coveted—eloquence, horsemanship and liberal hospitality. Orators were in demand, and to maintain the standard and reward excellence there were large assemblies as at Okatz. These lasted a whole month and the tribes came long journeys to hear the orators and poets as well as to engage in trade. The learning of the Arabs was chiefly confined to tribal history, astrology and the interpretation of dreams; in these they made considerable progress.

According to Moslem tradition the science of writing was not known in Mecca until introduced by Harb, Father of Abu Scofian, the great opponent of Mohammed, about A. D. 560. But this is evidently an error, for close intercourse existed long before this between Mecca and Sana the capital of Yemen where writing was well known; and in another tradition Abd el Muttalib is said to have *written* to Medina for help in his younger days, *i. e.*, about 520 A. D. Both Jews and Christians also dwelt in the vicinity of Mecca for two hundred years before the Hegira and used some form of writing. For writing materials they had abundance of reeds and palm-leaves as well as

<sup>1</sup> Smith's "Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia," pp. 100, 104.



the flat, smooth shoulder-bones of sheep. The seven poems are said to have been written in gold on Egyptian silk and suspended in the Kaaba

In the earlier part of his mission Mohammed despised the poets for the good reason that some, among them a poetess, wrote satirical verses about him. The Koran says "those who go astray follow the poets" (Surah 26 224) and a more vigorous though less elegant denouncement is recorded in the traditions (Mishkat Bk 22, ch. 10). "A belly full of purulent matter is better than a belly full of poetry." When two of the heathen poets, Labid and Hassan embraced Islam, the prophet became more lenient, and is reported to have said "poetry is a kind of composition which if it is good, it is good, and if it is bad, it is bad!"

Concerning the religion of the heathen Arabs the Mohammedan writer Ash-Shahīstani says. "The Arabs of pre-islamic times may, with reference to religion be divided into various classes. Some of them denied the Creator, the resurrection and men's return to God, and asserted that Nature possesses in itself the power of bestowing life, but that Time destroys. Others believed in a Creator and a creation produced by Him out of nothing but yet denied the resurrection. Others believed in a Creator and a creation but denied God's prophets and worshipped false gods concerning whom they believed that in the next world they would become *mediators* between themselves and God. For these deities they undertook pilgrimages, they brought offerings to them, offered them sacrifices and approached them with rites and ceremonies. Some things they held to be Divinely permitted, others to be prohibited. This was the religion of the majority of the Arabs." This is remarkable evidence for a Mohammedan who would naturally be inclined to take an unfavorable view. But his absolute silence regarding the Jews and Christians of Arabia is suggestive.

When the Arabian tribes lost their earliest monotheism (the religion of Job and their patriarchs) they first of all adopted

Sabeanism or the worship of the hosts of heaven. A proof of this is their ancient practice of making circuits around the shrines of their gods as well as their skill in astrology. Very soon however the star-worship became greatly corrupted and other deities, superstitions and practices were introduced. Ancient Arabia was a refuge for all sorts of religious-fugitives, and each band added something to the national stock of religious ideas. The Zoroastrians came to East Arabia; the Jews settled at Kheibar, Medina, and in Yemen; Christians of many sects lived in the north and in the highlands of Yemen. For all pagan Arabia Mecca was the centre many centuries before Mohammed. Here stood the Kaaba, the Arabian Pantheon, with its three hundred and sixty idols, one for each day in the year. Here the tribes of Hejaz met in annual pilgrimage to rub themselves on the Black Stone, to circumambulate the Beit Allah or Bethel of their creed and to hang portions of their garments on the sacred trees. At Nejran a sacred date-palm was the centre of pilgrimage. Everywhere in Arabia there were sacred stones or stone-heaps where the Arab devotees congregated to obtain special blessings. The belief in jinn or genii was well-nigh universal, but there was a distinction between them and gods. The gods have individuality while the jinn have not; the gods are worshipped, the jinn are only feared; the god has one form; the jinn appear in many. All that the Moslem world believes in regard to jinn is wholly borrowed from Arabian heathenism and those who have read the Arabian Nights know what a large place they hold in the everyday life of Moslems.

The Arabs were always superstitious, and legends of all sorts cluster around every weird desert rock, gnarled tree or intermittent fountain in Arabia. The early Arabs therefore marked off such sacred territory by pillars or cairns and considered many things such as shedding of blood, cutting of trees, killing game, etc., forbidden within the enclosure. This is the origin of the *Haramain* or sacred territory around Mecca and Medina.

Sacrifices were common, but not by fire. The blood of the offering was smeared over the rude stone altars and the flesh was eaten by the worshipper. First fruits were given to the gods and libations were poured out; a hair-offering formed a part of the ancient pilgrimage; this also is imitated to-day.

W. Robertson Smith tries to prove that *totemism* was the earliest form of Arabian idolatry and that each tribe had its sacred animal. The strongest argument for this is the undoubted fact that many of the tribal names were taken from animals and that certain animals were regarded as sacred in parts of Arabia. The theory is too far-reaching to be adopted at haphazard and the author's ideas of the significance of animal sacrifice are not in accord with the teaching of Scripture. It is however interesting to know that the same authority thinks the Arabian tribal marks or *wasms* were originally totem-marks and must have been tattooed on the body even as they are now used to mark property. The *washm* of the idolatrous Arabs seems related to their *wasms* and was a kind of tattooing of the hands, arms and gums. It was forbidden by Mohammed but is still widely prevalent in North Arabia among the Bedouin women.

Covenants of blood and of salt are also very ancient Semitic institutions and prevailed all over Arabia. The form of the oath was various. At Mecca the parties dipped their hands in a pan of blood and tasted the contents; in other places they opened a vein and mixed their fresh blood; again they would each draw the others' blood and smear it on seven stones set up in the midst. The later Arabs substituted the blood of a sheep or of a camel for human blood.

The principal idols of Arabia were the following; ten of them are mentioned by name in the Koran.

*Hubal* was in the form of a man and came from Syria; he was the god of Iain and had a high place of honor.

*Wadd* was the god of the firmament.

*Suwah*, in the form of a woman, was said to be from antediluvian times,

*Yaghuth* had the shape of a lion.

*Ya'ook* was in the form of a horse, and was worshipped in Yemen. Bronze images of this idol are found in ancient tombs.

*Nasr* was the eagle-god.

*El Uzza*, identified by some scholars with Venus, was worshipped at times under the form of an acacia tree.

*Allat* was the chief idol of the tribe of Thakif at Taif who tried to compromise with Mohammed to accept Islam if he would not destroy their god for three years. The name appears to be the feminine of Allah.

*Manat* was a huge stone worshipped as an altar by several tribes.

*Durwar* was the virgin's idol and young women used to go around it in procession; hence its name.

*Isaf* and *Naila* stood near Mecca on the hills of Safa and Mirwa, the visitation of these popular shrines is now a part of the Moslem pilgrimage.

*Habbab* was a large stone on which camels were slaughtered.

Beside these there were numerous other gods whose names have been utterly lost and yet who each had a place in the Pantheon at Mecca. Above all these was the supreme deity whom they called  $\delta \theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma$ , the God, or *Allah*. This name occurs several times in the ancient pre-islamic poems and proves that the Arabs knew the one true God by name even in the "time of ignorance." To Him they also made offerings though not of the first and best; in His name covenants were sealed and the holiest oaths were sworn. Enemy of *Allah* was the strongest term of opprobrium among the Arabs then as it is to-day. Wellhausen says, "In worship *Allah* had the last place, those gods being preferred who represented the interests of a particular circle and fulfilled the private desires of their worshippers. Neither the fear of *Allah* nor their reverence for the gods had much influence. The chief practical consequence of the great feasts was the observance of a truce in the holy months; and this in time had become mainly an affair of pure practical convenience. In general the disposition of the heathen Arabs, if it is at all truly reflected in their poetry, was profane in an unusual degree. The ancient inhabitants of Mecca practiced piety essentially as a trade, just as they do now; their

trade depended on the feast and its fair on the inviolability of the Haram and on the truce of the holy months."

There is no doubt that at the time of Mohammed's appearance the old national idolatry had degenerated. Many of the idols had no believers or worshippers. Sabeanism had also disappeared except in the north of Arabia; although it always left its influence which is evident not only in the Koran but in the superstitious practices of the modern Bedouins. Gross fetishism was the creed of many. One of Mohammed's contemporaries said, "When they found a fine stone they adored it, or, failing that, milked a camel over a heap of sand and worshipped that." The better classes at Mecca and Medina had ceased to believe anything at all. The forms of religion "were kept up rather for political and commercial reasons than as a matter of faith or conviction."<sup>1</sup>

Add to all this the silent but strong influence of the Jews and Christians who were in constant contact with these idolaters and we have the explanation of the *Hanifs*. These Hanifs were a small number of Arabs who worshipped only *Allah*, rejected polytheism, sought freedom from sin and resignation to God's will. There were Hanifs at Taif, Mecca and Medina. They were in fact seekers of truth, weary of the old idolatry and the prevalent hollow hypocrisy of the Arabs. The earliest Hanifs of whom we hear, were Waraka, the cousin of the prophet Mohammed, and Zeid bin Amr, surnamed the Inquirer. Mohammed at first also adopted this title of Hanif to express the faith of Abraham but soon after changed it to Moslem.

It is only a step from Hanifism to Islam. Primary monotheism, Sabeanism, idolatry, fetishism, Hanifism, and then the prophet with the sword to bring everything back to monotheism—monotheism, as modified by his own needs and character and compromises. The time of ignorance was a time of chaos. Everything was ready for one who could take in the whole situation, social, political and religious and form a cosmos. That man was Mohammed.

<sup>1</sup> Palmer's Introduction to the Koran, p. cv.

"There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his apostle"

The Doctrine of Revelation .

(Positive)  
"Mohammed is the apostle of God"  
[The sole channel of revelation and abrogates former revelations]

The Doctrine of God

(Negative)  
"There is no god but God"  
[Pantheism of Force]

I. By the KORAN  
(Wahi El Matlu)

Revelation, verbal, and which teaches the twofold demands of Islam —  
[The Book]

II By TRADITION  
(Wahi ghen Matlu)

Revelation by example of the perfect prophet  
[The Man]

III. Other Authority

- 1 His names { of the essence, *Allah*  
(the absolute unit)  
of the attributes, —  
*ninety-nine names*
- 2 His attributes { The physical emphasized above the moral  
Dedication of absolute force
- 3 His nature { Expressed by a series of negations  
"He is not"

A. Faith .  
(what to believe)  
"Iman"

B. Practice  
(what to do)  
"Din"  
[the five pillars]

- 1 Records of what Mohammed *did* (Sunnat-el-fa'il) (example)  
2 Records of what Mohammed *enjoined* (Sunnat-el kaul) (precept)  
3 Records of what Mohammed *allowed* (Sunnat-el-takrir) (license)
- a Among the *Sunnites* { IJMA'A or unanimous consent of the leading companions of Mohammed concerning I  
Kiyas or the deductions of orthodox teachers from sources I and II
- b Among the *Shi'ahs* { The doctrine of the twelve IMAMS—beginning with *Ali* who interpret I and II

ANALYSIS OF ISLAM AS A SYSTEM, DEVELOPED FROM ITS CREED.

1. In God { Moslems believe that 104 "books" were sent from heaven in the following order
- 2 Angels { angels  
jinn  
devils { To Adam—ten books  
"Seth—fifty "  
"Enoch—thirty "  
"Abraham—ten "  
these are utterly lost.
- 3 Books . { Moses—the TORAH { These are highly spoken of in the Koran but are now in corrupted condition and have been abrogated by  
"David—the ZABOOR {  
"Jesus—the INJIL { the final book
- 4 Last Day (Judgment) { "Mohammed—the KORAN { eternal in origin complete and miraculous in character, supreme in beauty and authority
- 5 Predestination { Adam—"Chosen of God"  
Noah—"Preacher of God"  
Abraham—"Friend of God"  
Moses—"Spokesman of God" [of God "  
Jesus—called "Word of God" and "Spirit  
MOHAMMED, (who has 201 names and titles)
- 6 Prophets . { A The Greater { Enoch Hud, Salih, Ishmael Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Lot, Aaron, Shuaib, Zakariah, John, David, Solomon, Elias, Job, Jonah, Ezra, Lukman, Zu-el-kifl and Alexander the Great, Elisha
- 7 Resurrection { B The Less . { Of these there have been thousands  
Twenty-two are mentioned in the Koran
- 1 Repetition of Creed { 1 Purification { washing various parts of the body  
three times ac'd'g to fourteen rules
- 2 Prayers (five times daily) including { 2 Posture (prostrations) { facing the kiblah (Mecca)  
prostrations
- 3 Fasting (month of Ramadhan) { 3 Petition { Declarat'n  
genusfections  
the Fatihah or first Surah  
Praise and Confession—the Salaam
4. Alms giving (about 1-40 of income)
- 5 Pilgrimage { Mecca (incumbent)  
Medina (meritorious but voluntary)  
Kerbela, Meshed Ali, etc., (Shi'ahs)
- 1 Verbally handed down from mouth to mouth { A The Sunnite Traditions (collected and recorded by the following six authorities)
- 2 and finally sifted and recorded by both sects { B The Shi'ah Traditions (five authorities)
- 1 Kafi A H 329  
2 Sheikh Ali " 381  
3 "Tahzib" " 466†  
4 "Isb'ar" " 466†  
5 Ar-Razi " 406

\* (Not one of them flourished until three centuries after Mohammed)

† By Abu Jaafer

## ANALYSIS OF THE BORROWED ELEMENTS OF ISLAM.

### I. From HEATHENISM

(As existing in Mecca or prevalent in other parts of Arabia)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a. Sabeanism  | Astrological superstitions, e.g., that meteorites are cast at the devil<br>Oaths by the stars and planets (Surahs 56, 53, etc.)<br>Circumambulation of Karba—and, perhaps, the <i>lunar</i> calendar<br>Allah (as name of supreme deity), used in old poets and worshipped by Mecca—centre of religious pilgrimage—The black-stone, etc. [Hanifs]  |
| b. Arabian Idolatry:  | Pilgrimage—in every detail dress, hair offerings, casting stones, sacrifice, Polygamy, slavery, easy divorce, and social laws generally, [running]. Ceremonial cleanliness, forbidden foods, <i>circumcision</i><br>Cosmogony—The different stores of the earth Bridge over hell<br>Paradise—Its character—the <i>houms</i> =parikas of Avesta<br>Doctrine of <i>jinn</i> and their various kinds Exorcism of <i>jinn</i> (Surah 113, 114) |
| c. Zoroastrianism.  | 1 Words that represent Jewish ideas { (and are not Arabic but Hebrew) <i>Taboot</i> (ark), <i>Torah</i> (law, Eden, Gehnnon, Rabbi, Abba)=teacher, <i>Sakinat</i> =Shekinah, <i>Taghoot</i> (used hundreds of times in Koran)=error <i>Furkan</i> , etc., etc., etc  |
| d. Buddhism.<br>The use of the rosary<br>(See Hughes' Dict. of Islam) | 2 Doctrinal views { <i>Unity of God</i><br>Resurrection<br>Seven hells and seven heavens<br>Final judgment Signs of last day<br>Gog and Magog  |

### II. From JUDAISM

(The Old Testament but more especially the *Talmud* as the source of Jewish ideas prevalent in Arabia just before Mohammed)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. Ideas and Doctrines<br>(According to the divisions of Rabbi Geiger) | 3 Moral and Ceremonial laws { Prayer Its time, posture, direction, etc. { with water<br>Laws regarding impurity of body Washing { or<br>" " purification of women, etc { with sand  |
| 4 Views of life  | { Use of "inshallah", age of discretion corresponds to Talmud { Talmud<br>Adam, Cain, Enoch, the fabulous things in the Koran are identical with North—the flood—Eber (Hud)—Isaac,—Ishmael—Joseph Cf Koran with Talmud [Talmud] |
| B. Stories and Legends<br>(According to Rabbi Geiger)                  | Abraham—His idolatry—Nimrod's oven—Pharao—the calf—(taken from Moses—The fables related of him and Aaron are old Jewish tales<br>Jethro (Shuab) . Stul (Taloot), Goliath (Jiloot), and Solomon especially Cf Talmud             |

### III. From CHRISTIANITY

(Corrupt form, as found in the apocryphal gospels)  
"Gospel of Barnabas"

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Reverence for New Testament—Injil—(Zacharias, John, Gabriel)  | 'The Koran could not have been composed by any except God<br>Will they say he forged it? Answer bring therefore a chapter like unto it'—THE KORAN (Surah Yunas) |
| 2 Respect for religious teachers, the Koran references to priests and monks   |   |
| 3 Jesus Christ—His names—Word of God, Spirit of God etc.—Puerile miracles— <i>Denial of crucifixion</i> (Basilidians, etc.) [meaning "pure ones"] |   |
| 4 The Virgin—Her sinlessness—and the apostles—"hawan" an Abyssinian word  |   |
| 5 Wrong ideas of the Trinity As held by Arabian heretical sects   |   |
| 6 Christian legends as of "Seven Sleepers," "Alexander of the horns," "Iok-"  |   |
| 7 A fast month Ramadhan to imitate lent [man]"(=Æsop)   |   |
| 8 Alms-giving as an essential part of true worship  |   |

## XVIII

### THE PROPHET AND HIS BOOK

**I**N 570 A. D. Abdullah the son of Abd el Muttalib a Mecca merchant went on a trading trip from Mecca to Medina and died there; the same year his wife, Amina, gave birth to a boy, named *Mohammed*, at Mecca. One hundred years later the name of this Arab lad, joined to that of the Almighty, was called out from ten thousand mosques five times daily, from Muscat to Morocco, and his new religion was sweeping everything before it in three continents.

What is the explanation of this marvel of history? Many theories have been laid down and the true explanation is probably the sum of all of them. The weakness of Oriental Christianity and the corrupt state of the church; the condition of the Roman and Persian empires; the character of the new religion; the power of the sword and fanaticism; the genius of Mohammed; the partial truth of his teaching; the genius of Mohammed's successors, the hope of plunder and love of conquest;—such are some of the causes given for the early and rapid success of Islam.

Mohammed was a prophet without miracles but not without genius. Whatever we may deny him we can never deny that he was a great man with great talents. But he was not a self-made man. His environment accounts in a large measure for his might and for his method in becoming a religious leader. There was first of all the political factor. "The year of the elephant" had seen the defeat of the Christian hosts of Yemen who came to attack the Kaaba. This victory was to the young and ardent mind of Mohammed prophetic of the political future of Mecca and no doubt his ambition assigned himself



the chief place in the coming conflict of Arabia against the Roman and Persian oppressors.

Next came the religious factor. The times were ripe for religious leadership and Mecca was already the centre of a new movement. The Hanifs had rejected the old idolatry and entertained the hope that a prophet would arise from among them.<sup>1</sup> There was material of all sorts at hand to furnish the platform of a new faith, it only required the builder's eye to call cosmos out of chaos. To succeed in doing this it would be necessary to reject material also, a comprehensive religion and a compromising religion, so as to suit Jew and Christian and idolater alike.

Then there was the family factor, or, in other words, the aristocratic standing of Mohammed. He was not a mere "camel-driver." The Koreish were the ruling clan of Mecca, Mecca was even then the centre for all Arabia; and Mohammed's grandfather, Abd el Muttalib, was the most influential and powerful man of that aristocratic city. The pet-child of Abd el Muttalib was the orphan boy Mohammed. Until his eighth year he was under the shelter and favor of this chief man of the Koreish. He learned what it was to be lordly and to exercise power, and never forgot it. The man, his wife and his training were the determinative factors in the character of Mohammed. The ruling factor was the mind and genius of the man himself. Of attractive personal qualities, beautiful countenance, and accomplished in business, he first won the attention and then the heart of a very wealthy widow, Khadijah. Koelle tells us that she was "evidently an Arab lady of a strong mind and mature experience who maintained a decided ascendancy over her husband, and managed him with great wisdom and firmness. This appears from nothing more strikingly, than from the very remarkable fact that she succeeded in keeping him from marrying any other wife as long as she lived, though at her death, when he had long ceased to

<sup>1</sup> Koelle's Mohammed, p 27.

be a young man he indulged without restraint in the multiplication of wives. But as Khadijah herself was favorably disposed toward Hanifism, it is highly probable that she exercised her commanding influence over her husband in such a manner as to promote and strengthen his own attachment to the reformatory sect of monotheists."

Mohammed married this woman when he had reached his twenty-fifth year. At the age of forty he began to have his revelations and to preach his new religion. His first convert, naturally perhaps, was his wife, then Ali and Zeid his two adopted children, then his friend, the prosperous merchant, Abu-Bekr. Such was the nucleus for the new faith

Mohammed is described in tradition as a man above middle height, of spare figure, commanding presence, massive head, noble brow, and jet-black hair. His eyes were piercing. He had a long bushy beard. Decision marked his every movement and he always walked rapidly. Writers seem to agree that he had the genius to command and expected obedience from equals as well as inferiors. James Freeman Clarke says that to him more than to any other of whom history makes mention was given

"The monarch mind, the mystery of commanding,  
The birth-hour gift, the art Napoleon  
Of wielding, moulding, gathering, welding, banding  
The hearts of thousands till they moved as one."

As to the moral character of Mohammed there is great diversity of opinion and the conclusions of different scholars cannot be easily reconciled. Muir, Dods, Badger, and others claim that he was at first sincere and upright, himself believing in his so-called revelations, but that afterward, intoxicated by success, he used the dignity of his prophethip for personal ends and was conscious of deceiving the people in some of his later revelations. Bosworth Smith and his like, maintain that he was "a very Prophet of God" all through his life and that

the sins and faults of his later years are only specks on the sun of his glory. Older writers, with whom I agree, saw in Mohammed only the skill of a clever impostor from the day of his first message to the day of his death. Koelle, whose book is a mine of accurate scholarship and whose experience of many years mission-work in Moslem lands qualifies him for a sober judgment, sees no striking contrast between the earlier and later part of Mohammed's life that cannot be easily explained by the influence of Khadijah. He was *semper idem*, an ambitious enthusiast choosing different means for the same end and never very particular as to the character of the means used.

Aside from the question of Mohammed's sincerity no one can apologize for his moral character if judged according to the law of his time, the law he himself professed to reveal or the law of the New Testament. By the New Testament law of Jesus Christ, who was the last prophet before Mohammed and whom Mohammed acknowledged as the Word of God, the Arabian prophet stands self-condemned. ~~The most cursory examination of his biography proves that he broke repeatedly every sacred precept of the Sermon on the Mount. And the Koran itself proves that the Spirit of Jesus was entirely absent from the mind of Mohammed. The Arabs among whom Mohammed was born and grew to manhood also had a law, although they were idolaters, slave-holders and polygamists. Even the robbers of the desert who, like Mohammed, laid in wait for caravans, had a code of honor. Three flagrant breaches of this code stain the character of Mohammed.<sup>1</sup> It was quite lawful to marry a captive woman whose relatives had been slain in battle, but not until *three months after their death*. Mohammed only waited three days in the case of the Jewess Safia. It was lawful to rob merchants but not pilgrims on their way to Mecca. Mohammed broke this old law and "revealed a verse" to justify his conduct. Even in the "Time of Ig-~~

<sup>1</sup> See an article on "Mohammedanism and Christianity."—Dr. Robert Bruce, *The Christian Intelligencer* (New York) April, 1894.

norance" it was incest to marry the wife of an adopted son even after his decease. The prophet Mohammed fell in love with the lawful wife of his adopted son Zeid, prevailed on him to divorce her and then married her immediately; for this also he had a "special revelation." But Mohammed was not only guilty of breaking the old Arab laws and coming infinitely short of the law of Christ, he never even kept the laws of which he claimed to be the divinely appointed medium and custodian. When Khadijah died he found his own law, lax as it was, insufficient to restrain his lusts. His followers were to be content with four lawful wives; he indulged in ten and entered into negotiations for matrimony with thirty others.

It is impossible to form a just estimate of the character of Mohammed unless we know somewhat of his relations with women. This subject however is of necessity shrouded from decent contemplation by the superabounding brutality and filthiness of its character. A recent writer in a missionary magazine touching on this subject says, "We must pass the matter over, simply noting that there are depths of filth in the Prophet's character which may assort well enough with the depraved sensuality of the bulk of his followers . . . but which are simply loathsome in the eyes of all over whom Christianity in any measure or degree has influence." We have no inclination to lift the veil that in most English biographies covers the family-life of the prophet of Arabia. But it is only fair to remark that these love-adventures and the disgusting details of his married life form a large part of the "lives of the prophet of God" which are the fireside literature of educated Moslems.

Concerning the career of Mohammed after the Hegira, or flight from Mecca (622 A. D.) a brief summary suffices to show of what spirit he was. Under his orders and direction the Moslems lay in wait for caravans and plundered them, the first victories of Islam were the victories of highwaymen and robbers. Asma, the poetess who assailed the character of Mo-

hammed, was foully murdered in her sleep by Omeir, and Mohammed praised him for the deed. Similarly Abu Afik, the Jew, was killed at the request of Mohammed. The story of the massacre of the Jewish captives is a dark stain also on the character of the prophet whose mouth ever spoke of "the Merciful and Compassionate." After the victory, trenches were dug across the market-place and one by one the male-captives were beheaded on the brink of the trench and cast in it. The butchery lasted all day and it needed torch-light to finish it. After dark Mohammed solaced himself with Rihana a Jewish captive girl, who refused marriage and Islam, but became his bond-slave. It is no wonder that shortly after, Zeinab, who had lost her father and brother in battle, tried to avenge her race by attempting to poison Mohammed.

In the seventh year of the Hegira Mohammed went to Mecca and instituted for all time the Moslem pilgrimage. The following year he again set out for Mecca at the head of an army of 10,000 men and took the city without a battle. Other expeditions followed and up to the day, almost the hour, of his death the prophet was planning conquests by the sword. It is a bloody story from the year of the Hegira until the close of the Caliphates. He who reads it in Muir's volumes cannot but feel the sad contrast between the early days of Islam and the early days of Christianity. The germ of all *sword-conquest* must be sought in the life and book of Mohammed. Both consecrate butchery in the service of Allah. The successors of Mohammed were not less unmerciful than was the prophet himself.

Thus far we have considered Mohammed from a critical standpoint and have written facts. But the Mohammed of history and the Mohammed of the present day Moslem biographers are two different persons. Even in the Koran, Mohammed is human and liable to error. Tradition has changed all that. He is now sinless and almost divine. The two hundred and one names given him by pious believers proclaim his apotheosis.

He is called Light of God, Peace of the World, Glory of the Ages, First of all Creatures and names yet more lofty and blasphemous. He is at once the sealer and concealor of all former prophets and revelations. They have not only been succeeded but also supplanted by Mohammed. No Moslem prays *to* him, but every Moslem daily prays for him in endless repetition. He is the only powerful intercessor on the day of judgment. Every detail of his early life is surrounded with fantastical miracles and marvels to prove his divine commission. Even the ~~most~~ in his life is attributed to divine permission or command and so the very ~~parts~~ of his character are his endless glory and his sign of superiority. God favored him above all creatures. He dwells in the highest heaven and is several degrees above Jesus in honor and station. His name is never uttered or written without the addition of a prayer. "Ya Mohammed" is the open sesame to every door of difficulty, temporal or spiritual. One hears that name in the bazaar and in the street, in the mosque and from the minaret. Sailors sing it while raising their sails, *hammals* groan it to raise a burden; the beggar howls it to obtain alms; it is the Bedouin's cry in attacking a caravan, it hushes babies to sleep as a cradle song, it is the pillow of the sick and the last word of the dying, it is written on the door-posts and in their hearts as well as since eternity on the throne of God, it is to the devout Moslem the name above every name; grammarians can tell you how its four letters are representative of all the sciences and mysteries by their wonderful combination. The name of Mohammed is the best to give a child and the best to swear by for an end of all dispute in a close bargain. The exceeding honor given to Mohammed's name by his followers is only *one* indication of the place their prophet occupies in their system and holds in their hearts. From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh. Mohammed holds the keys of heaven and hell. No Moslem, however bad his character, will perish finally; no unbeliever, however good his life, can be saved ex-

cept through Mohammed. One has only to question the Moslem masses or read a single volume of the traditions to prove these statements

Islam denies a mediator and an incarnation but the "Story of the Jew" and similar tales put Mohammed in the place of a mediator without an incarnation, without an atonement, without ~~incarnation~~. Our Analysis of the Moslem creed shows how all the later teaching which so exalted Mohammed was present in the germ. "*La ilaha illa Allah*" is the theology, "*Mohammed er rasool Allah*," the complete Soteriology of Islam. The logical necessity of a perfect mediator was at the basis of the *doctrine of Tradition*. Islam has, it claims, a perfect revelation in the letter of the Koran; and a perfect example in the life of Mohammed. The stream has not risen higher than its sources.

THE BOOK OF ISLAM When Mohammed Webb the latest American champion of Islam spoke at the Chicago Parliament of religions in praise of the Koran and its teaching, Rev. George E. Post, M. D., of Beirut deemed it a sufficient reply to let the book speak for itself. He said: "I hold in my hand a book which is never touched by 200,000,000 of the human race with unwashed hands, a book which is never carried below the waist, a book which is never laid upon the floor, a book every word of which to these 200,000,000 of the human race is considered the direct word of God which came down from heaven. I propose without note or comment to read to you a few words from the sacred book and you may make your own comments upon them afterward." After quoting several verses to show that Mohammed preached a religion of the sword and of polygamy, he added: "There is one chapter which I dare not stand before you, my sisters, mothers and daughters, and read to you. I have not the face to read it; nor would I like to read it even in a congregation of men. It is the sixty-fourth chapter of the Koran."

What sort of a book is this revelation of Mohammed of which

parts are unfit to read before a Christian audience and which yet is too holy to be touched by other than Moslem hands? A book which the orthodox Moslem believes to be uncreated and eternal, all-embracing and all-surpassing, miraculous in its origin and contents. A book concerning which Mohammed himself has said, "If the Koran were wrapped in a skin and thrown into the fire it would not burn." Goethe described it thus: "However often we turn to it, at first disgusting us each time afresh it soon attracts, astounds, and in the end enforces our reverence. Its style in accordance with its contents and aim is stern, grand, terrible—and ever and anon truly sublime. Thus this book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence." And Noldeke writes, "if it were not for the exquisite flexibility and vigor of the Arabic language itself, which, however is to be attributed more to the age in which the author lived than to his individuality, it would scarcely be bearable to read the later portions of the Koran a second time" Goethe read only the translation; and Noldeke was master of the original. It is as hopeless to arrive at a unanimous verdict regarding the Koran as it is to reach an agreement regarding Mohammed.

The book has fifty-five noble titles on the lips of its people but is generally called *the Koran* or "The Reading." It has one hundred and fourteen chapters, some of which are as long as the book of Genesis and others consisting of two or three sentences only. The whole book is smaller than the New Testament, has no chronological order whatever and is without logical sequence or climax. What strikes the reader first of all is its jumbled character; every sort of fact and fancy, law and legend is thrown together piecemeal. The four proposed chronological arrangements, by Jorlal-ud-Din, Muir, Rodwell and Noldeke are in utter disagreement. Only two of Mohammed's contemporaries are mentioned in the entire book and his own name occurs only five times. The book is unintelligible to the average Moslem without a commentary, and I defy any



one else to read it through, without the aid of notes, and understand a single chapter or even section

We will not stop to consider the fabulous account which Moslems give of the origin of the Koran and how the various chapters were revealed. Although Moslems claim that the book was eternally perfect in form and preserved in heaven, they are compelled to admit that it was revealed piece-meal and at various times and places by Mohammed to his followers. It was recorded in writing, after the rude Arab fashion, "on palm-leaves and sheep-bones and white stones" to some extent; but for the most part was preserved orally by constant repetition. Omar suggested to Abu-Bekī after the battle of Yemama that since many of the Koran reciters were slain, it would be the part of wisdom to put the book of God in permanent form. The task was committed to Zaid, the chief amanuensis of Mohammed and the resulting volume was entrusted to the care of Hafsa, one of the widows of the prophet. Ten years later a recension of the Koran was ordered by the Caliph Othman and all previous copies were called in and burned. This recension of Othman, sent to all the chief cities of the Moslem world, has been faithfully handed down to the present. "No other book in the world has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text." (Hughes) The present variations in editions of the Arabic Koran are numerous but none of them are, in any sense important. The present Koran is the same book that Mohammed professed to have received from God. Out of its own mouth will we judge the book, and we cannot judge the book without judging the prophet.

We will speak later of the poetical beauties of the Koran and of its literary character. We do not deny also that there are in the Koran certain moral beauties, such as its deep and fervent trust in the one God, its lofty descriptions of His Almighty power and omnipresence, and its sententious wisdom. The first chapter and the verse of the throne are examples.

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.  
 Praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds!  
 The Compassionate, the Merciful!  
 King on the Day of Judgment!  
 Thee do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help!  
 Guide Thou us on the right path!  
 The path of those to whom Thou art gracious!  
 Not of those with whom Thou art angered, nor of those who go astray."

"God! there is no God but He; the living, the Eternal  
 Slumber doth not overtake Him, neither sleep.  
 To Him belongeth whatsoever is in heaven and on the earth.  
 The preservation of both is no weariness unto Him.  
 He is the high, the mighty."

The great bulk of the Koran is either legislative or legendary; the book consists of laws and stories. The former relate entirely to subjects which engrossed the Arabs of Mohammed's day—the laws of inheritance, the relation of the sexes, the law of retaliation, etc.—and this part of the book has a local character. The stories on the other hand go back to Adam and the patriarchs, take in several unknown Arabian prophets or leaders, centre around Jesus Christ, Moses and Solomon and do not venture beyond Jewish territory except to mention Alexander the Great and Lukman (*Æsop*).

From the analytical tables it is not very difficult to see whence the material for the Koran was selected. Rabbi Geiger's book, recently translated into English, will satisfy any reader that Hughes is nearly right when he says, "Mohamedanism is simply Talmudic Judaism adapted to Arabia plus the apostleship of Jesus and Mohammed." But it is *Talmudic* Judaism and not the Judaism of the Old Testament. For the Koran is remarkable most of all not because of its contents but because of its omissions. Not because of what it reveals but for what it *conceals* of "former revelations." The defects of its teaching are many. It is full of historical errors and blunders. It has monstrous fables. It teaches a false cos-

mogony. It is full of superstitions. It perpetuates slavery, polygamy, religious intolerance, the seclusion and degradation of woman and petrifies social life. But all this is of minor importance compared with the fact that the Koran professing to be a *revelation* from God does not teach the way to reconciliation with God and seems to ignore the first and great barrier to such reconciliation, viz: SIN. Of this the Old and New Testaments are always speaking. Sin and salvation are the subject of which the *Torah* and the *Zaboor* and the *Inyil* (Law Prophets and Psalms) are full. The Koran is silent or if not absolutely silent, keeps this great question ever in the background.<sup>1</sup>

It is a commonplace of theology that "to form erroneous conceptions of sin is to fall into still graver errors regarding the way of salvation." Mohammed, as is evident from his whole life, had no deep conviction of sin in himself; he was full of self-righteousness. His ideas, too, of God, were *physical*, not *moral*, he saw God's power, but never had a glimpse of His holiness. And so we find that there is an inward unity binding together the prophet and his book as to their real character in the light of the gospel. With *such* ideas of God, *such* a prophet and *such* a book, it is easy to understand why the Mohammedan world became what it is to-day. These bare outlines of the system of Islam are all that are necessary to indicate its nature and genus. Allah's character as the revealer, Mohammed's character as the channel of the revelation, and the revelation itself, show us Islam in its cradle.

<sup>1</sup> Even the sacred books of India and China and Ancient Egypt compare more favorably with the Bible in this respect than does the Koran. They teach the heinous character of sin, as sin, and do not deny the need of a mediator or of propitiatory sacrifice but are full of both ideas.

## XIX

### THE WAHABI RULERS AND REFORMERS

"Nothing is so easy to appreciate as true Christian commerce. It is a speaking argument, even to the lowest savage, for a gospel of truth and love, and yet more to the races sophisticated by a false civilization."—*Principal Cairns.*

THE history of the Arabian Peninsula has never yet been written. Many books describe certain periods of its history from the time of the earlier Arabian rulers, but there is no volume that tells the story from the beginning in a way worthy of the subject. It would be interesting to search out the earliest records and trace the Himyarite dynasties to their origin; to learn the story of the Jewish immigrants who settled in Medina, Mecca and Yemen even before the Christian Era; to follow the Arabs in their conquests under the banner of the prophet; to watch the sudden rise of the Carmathians and follow them in their career of destruction; to search the old libraries and rediscover the romantic story of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English in Arabian waters,—but our space limits us to the story of the past century.<sup>1</sup>

To understand the present political conditions and recent history of Arabia, we must go back to the year 1765, which marks the rise of the remarkable Wahabi movement, which was at the bottom of all the political changes that the Peninsula has seen since that time. This movement was the renaissance of Islam, even though it ended in apparent disaster, and was politically a splendid fiasco. The Wahabi reform attracted the attention of Turkey to Arabia; its influence was felt in India to

<sup>1</sup>For a Chronological table of Arabian history, from the earliest times to the present, see *Appendix.*

the extent of declaring a *jihad* or religious war against the government, and compelled England to study the situation and send representatives to the very heart of Arabia

Beginning with the Wahabî dynasty, the history of the past century in Arabia centres in the rulers of Nejd and Oman, the Turkish conquests and the English influence and occupation. The strong independent government of Nejd under Ibn Rashîd and his successor, Abd-ul-Azîz, would have been an impossibility except for the result of the Wahabî movement, in demonstrating the weakness of Turkish rule. And it was for fear of the Wahabî aggressions that Turkey strengthened her Arabian possessions and invaded Hassa.

Mohammed bin Abd-ul-Wahab was born at Ayinah in Nejd, in 1691. Carefully instructed by his father in the tenets of Islam according to the school of Hambalî, the strictest of the four great sects<sup>1</sup> Abd-ul-Wahab visited the schools of Mecca, Busrah and Bagdad, to increase his learning. At Medina, too, he absorbed the deepest learning of the Moslem divines and soaked himself in the "six correct books" of traditions. In his travels he had observed the laxity of faith and practice which had crept in, especially among the Turks and the Arabs of the large cities. He tried to distinguish between the essential elements of Islam and its later additions, some of which seemed to him to savor of gross idolatry and worldliness. What most offended the rigid monotheism of his philosophy was the almost universal visitation of shrines, invocation of saints and honor paid to the tomb of Mohammed. The use of the rosary, of jewels, silk, gold, silver, wine and tobacco, were all abominations to be eschewed. These were indications of the great need for reform. The earlier teaching of the companions of the prophet had been set aside or overlaid by later teaching. Even the four orthodox schools had departed from

<sup>1</sup> The four orthodox sects are called Hanafis, Shafis, Malakis, and Hambalis. The last was founded by Ibn Hambal at Bagdad, 780 A. D. it is the least popular sect.

the pure faith by allowing pilgrimage to Medina, by multiplying festivals and philosophizing about the nature of Allah. Therefore it was that Abd-ul-Wahab preached reform not only, but proclaimed himself the leader of a new sect. His teaching was based on the Koran and the early traditions.

This movement is chiefly distinguished from the orthodox system in the following particulars.

1. The Wahabis reject *Ijma* or the agreement of later interpreters.
2. They offer no prayers to prophet, wali, or saint, nor visit their tombs for that purpose.
3. They say Mohammed is *not yet* an intercessor; although at the last day he will be.
4. They forbid women to visit the graves of the dead.
5. They allow only four festivals, *Fitr*, *Azha*, *'Ashura* and *Lailat El Mobarek*
6. They do not celebrate Mohammed's birth
7. They use their knuckles for prayer-counting, and not rosaries.
8. They strictly forbid the use of silk, gold, silver ornaments, tobacco, music, opium, and every luxury of the Orient, except perfume and women
9. They have anthropomorphic ideas of God by strictly literal interpretation of the Koran texts about "His hand," "sitting," etc.
10. They believe *jihad* or religious war, is not out of date, but incumbent on the believer
11. They condemn minarets, tombstones, and everything that was not in use during the first years of Islam.

There is no doubt that Abd-ul-Wahab honestly tried to bring about a reform and that in many of the points enumerated his reform was strictly a return to primitive Islam. But it was too radical to last. It took no count of modern civilization and the ten centuries that had modified the very character of the Arabs of the towns not to speak of those outside of Arabia. Yet the preaching of the Reformer found willing ears in the isolation of the desert. As in the days of Omar, the promise of reform in religion was made attractive by the promise of rich booty to those who fought in the path of God and de-

stroyed creature-worshippers. Mohammed Abd-ul-Wahab was the preacher, but to propagate his doctrine he needed a sword. Mohammed bin Saud, of Deraiyah, supplied the latter factor and the two Mohammeds, allied by marriage and a common ambition, began to make converts and conquests. The son of Bin Saud, Abd-ul-Aziz, was the Omar of the new movement, and his son Saud even surpassed the father in military prowess and successful conquest. Abd-ul-Aziz was murdered by a Persian fanatic while prostrate in prayer in the mosque at Deraiyah, in 1803. Saud at this very time was pushing the Wahabi conquest to the very gates of Mecca. On the 27th of April, 1803, he carried his banner into the court of the Kaaba and began to cleanse the holy place. Piles of pipes, tobacco, silks, rosaries and amulets were collected into one great heap and set on fire by the infuriated enthusiasts. No excesses were committed against the people except that religion was forced upon them. The mosques were filled by public "whips" who used their leather thongs without mercy on all the lazy or negligent. Everybody, for a marvel, prayed five times a day. The result of his victory at Mecca was communicated by the dauntless Saud in the following naive letter addressed to the Sultan of Turkey :

"SAUD TO SALIM—I entered Mecca on the fourth day of Moharram in the 1218th year of the Hegira. I kept peace toward the inhabitants. I destroyed all things that were idolatrously worshipped. I abolished all taxes except those that were required by the law. I confirmed the Kadhi whom you had appointed agreeably to the commands of the prophet of God. I desire that you will give orders to the rulers of Damascus and Cairo not to come up to the sacred city with the *Mahmal*<sup>1</sup> and with trumpets and drums. Religion is not profited by these things. May the peace and blessing of God be with you."

The absence of long salutations and the usual phrases of honor is characteristic of all Wahabi correspondence. In this

<sup>1</sup> The Mahmal is a covered litter, an emblem of royalty and of superstitious honor sent from Cairo and Damascus to Mecca, to this day.

respect it is a great improvement on the excessive lavishment of titles and honors so usual among Moslems, especially among the Persians and the Turks.

Before the close of the year Saud avenged his father's death by attacking Medina and destroying the gilded dome that covered the prophet's tomb. As early as 1801 parties of plundering Wahabis had sacked the tomb of Hussein and carried off rich booty from the sacred city of Kerbela. According to the official inventory this booty consisted of vases, carpets, jewels, weapons innumerable; also, 500 gilded copper-plates from the dome, 4,000 cashmere shawls, 6,000 Spanish doubloons, 350,000 Venetian coins of silver, 400,000 Dutch ducats, 250,000 Spanish dollars and a large number of Abyssinian slaves belonging to the mosque.<sup>1</sup> Their raids and conquests extended in every direction so that in a few years the Wahabi power was supreme in the greater part of Arabia.

A single illustration will show the great Saud's<sup>2</sup> prudence and celerity in action. When he invaded the Hauran plains, in 1810, although it was thirty-five days' journey from his capital, yet the news of his approach only preceded his arrival by two days, nor was it known what part of Syria he planned to attack, and thirty-five villages of Hauran were sacked before the Pasha of Damascus could make any demonstrations for defence!

Meanwhile the Sublime Porte remained inactive and nothing was done to regain the sacred territories. It was deemed impossible to reach Mecca from Damascus with any large body of soldiers through hostile territory where supplies were scarce. Salvation was expected from Egypt; and it was hoped that an

<sup>1</sup> Zehm's *Arabie*, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> Saud died at the age of forty-five, in April, 1814, from fever, at Deraiyah. He was a strong-willed ruler but administered justice with rigor, he was wise in council and skillful in settling disputes and healing factions. Of his eight children, Abdullah, the eldest, succeeded him as ruler.



expedition by sea might succeed in taking Jiddah and thence advance upon Mecca. Mohammed Ali began preparations in 1810, and in the summer of 1811 an expedition under his son Touson Pasha was sent out from Suez. In October the fleet arrived at Yenbo and the troops took the town. Ghaleb the Sherif of Mecca proved false to the Wahabis and made negotiations with the Turkish commander to hand over the town. In January the army occupied Medina but at Bedr the troops were attacked by Wahabis and utterly routed.

All through this first campaign the cruelty and treachery of the Turks was shocking even to the mind of their Bedoun allies. None of their promises were kept; the skulls of the enemy slain were constructed into a sort of tower near Medina; Ghalib, the Sherif, was betrayed and in violation of the most sacred promises he was taken prisoner and deported; wholesale butchery of the wounded and mutilation of the slain were common.

A second army under Mustafa Bey advanced toward Mecca and also took possession of Taif. Although the five cities of the Hejaz were now in the hands of the Turks the Wahabi power was not yet broken. Mohammed Ali Pasha himself proceeded from Egypt with another army, he had great difficulty in securing transportation and provisions. Finally he landed his troops at Jiddah and went on to Mecca, planning to attack Taraba the great Wahabi centre of the south, as Deraiyah was the capital of the north. Here the enemy had gathered in great numbers under an Amazon leader, a widow named Ghalye who ruled the Begoum Arabs. She was reported to be a sorceress among the Turks and stories of her skill and courage inspired them with fear. When the attack was made the Wahabis came off victorious and so harassed the army of occupation that during 1813 and the beginning of 1814 they remained perfectly inactive. Later the Turks made a sea attack on Gunfida, the port south of Jiddah, and captured it. The Wahabis however captured the wells that supplied the

town, made a sortie and the Turkish troops fled panic-stricken, to their ships. Discontentment arose among the Turkish troops. Supplies failed and wages were in arrears. Mohammed Ali changed now his tactics and tried to bribe the Bedouin chiefs to desert the Wahabi leaders. At this time the Turkish army consisted of nearly 20,000 men and yet the campaign dragged on without a definite victory.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest battle was fought at Bissel near Taif where Mohammed Ali defeated the Wahabis with great slaughter. Six dollars were offered for every Wahabi head and before the day ended 5,000 bloody heads were piled up before the Pasha. About 300 prisoners were taken and offered quarter. But on reaching Mecca the cruel commander impaled fifty of them before the gates of the city, twelve suffered a like horrible death at every one of the ten coffee-houses, halting places between Mecca and Jiddah, the remainder were killed at Jiddah and their carcasses left to dogs and vultures.

But the battle went against the Turks when they met the desert and its terrors. Hunger, thirst, fevers and the Bedouin robbers attacked the camp. In one day a hundred horses died, the soldiers were dissatisfied and deserted. At length Mohammed Ali made proposals of peace to Abdullah bin Saud the Wahabi chief, and when Saud entered Kasim with an army the negotiations were concluded and peace was declared. But peace was not kept, and Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Mohammed Pasha was despatched with a large expedition against the Wahabis in August, 1816.

While Egypt was attacking the Wahabi strongholds from the west, with infinite trouble and dubious results, the greatest loss the Wahabi government had yet suffered, was from a blow dealt by the British. In 1809 an English expedition went from Bombay against the piratical inhabitants of their chief

<sup>1</sup> The history of its tedious prosecution and all its cruelty on the side of the Turks is told by Buickhardt, the traveller, who was himself living in Mecca at this time.

castle and harbor, Ras-el-Kheimah. The place was bombarded and laid in ashes

Ibrahim Pasha accomplished by intrigue and bribery what his father failed to do by force of arms. After a series of advances one tribe after another was detached from the Wahabi government. At last without a battle the capital Deraiyah was taken, Abdullah captured, sent to Constantinople and there publicly executed on December 18th, 1818.

The Turks were naturally jubilant over their success and thought they had made an end of the hated Wahabis. They soon learned their mistake. No sooner was the army of Ibrahim Pasha withdrawn than the old spirit rehabilitated the fallen empire with the old time strength of fanaticism. The army of the Pashas could not govern or even occupy the vast territories they had overrun. Within a few years Turki the son of the late Amir was proclaimed Sultan of Nejd, recovered all and more than his father's territories, and by the judicious payment of a small tribute and yet smaller honor to the Egyptian Khedive retained the throne until he was murdered in 1831. His son and successor, Feysul, took the reins of government and was rash enough to repudiate the Egyptian Suzerainty. Nejd was again invaded. Hofhoof and Katif were temporarily occupied by Egyptian and Turkish troops and Feysul was banished to Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Feysul died in 1865, having returned from his banishment in 1843 and ruling alone and supreme for all those years. His son Abdullah, who had acted as regent during the later years

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave visited the Wahabi capital during the reign of Feysul and gives his usual picturesque descriptions of the court and family life of the genial tyrant. But it is necessary to take his accounts of Riad *cum grano salis*; a Jesuit Roman Catholic would not describe the strict Puritanism of the Wahabis with any degree of admiration. Palgrave's statistics of the strength of Feysul's army and of the population of his dominions are utterly unreliable and greatly exaggerated. However one must read Palgrave to know what was the condition of the Wahabi empire in 1860-63, for he is our only authority for that period.

of Feysul, succeeded to the throne. But there was a rival in his brother Saud. Intrigues, treasons and violence were hatching in the palace courts even before the death of Feysul. The dagger and the coffee-cup of poisoned beverage have always been favorite weapons in seating and unseating the rulers of Arabia. A prolonged fight ensued between the two brothers. Saud was at first successful but Abdullah flying to Turkey invited the aid of that power with the result that an expedition from Bagdad ended in formally and permanently occupying El Hassa as a Turkish province.

At the time of Saud's death, in 1874, the conflict was renewed, but Abdullah ultimately regained the supremacy and was ruler at Riad until 1886, when events occurred that heralded the rise of another power in Nejd, based on political intrigue and the sword rather than on religion and fanaticism.

When Turki the Amir was murdered by his own cousin, Meshari, and Feysul succeeded to the throne, there was present at Riad in the army an obscure youth from Hail, Abdullah bin Rashid. He it was who entered the palace by stealth, stabbed Meshari, and helped to restore Feysul to his father's seat as ruler. His valor and loyalty were rewarded by bestowing upon him the governorship of his own native province Shammar; he was also granted a small army to strengthen the Wahabi rule in that region. He soon became almost as strong as his master and showed himself an expert in all the intrigue and skill possible to the Arabs. He extended his personal influence on all sides, built a massive palace at Hail and defeated all who plotted his destruction. Hired assassins dogged him on the streets, but Abdullah escaped every danger and his star remained in the ascendant. In 1844 he died suddenly, leaving unaccomplished ambitions and three sons, Telal, Mitaab, and Mohammed. Telal, the eldest son, was proclaimed ruler and was ever more popular than his father had been, and no less successful as a ruler. He strengthened his capital, invited merchants from Busrah and Bagdad to reside there, and gradu-

ally but surely established his entire independence of the Wahabi ruler at Riad. Tormented, however, by an internal malady he shot himself in 1867. His younger brother, Mitaab, who succeeded, ruled very briefly and was murdered by his nephews, the sons of Telal, within a year. Meanwhile, the third son of Abdullah bin Rashid, Mohammed, had been a refugee at the Riad capital. But his ambitions now found their opportunity and his true character was revealed. By permission of the Amīr Abdullah bin Feysul he went back to Hail. He commenced by stabbing his nephew Bander who had usurped the throne; he then killed the five remaining children of his brother Telal and became undisputed Amīr at Hail in 1868. During the next eighteen years he consolidated his authority. His rule was after the Arab heart—with a rod of iron and lavish hospitality, continual executions and continual feasting.

The Arabs at Bahrein tell many almost incredible tales of Mohammed bin Rashid's stern justice and speedy method of executing it, as well of his cruelty to those who resisted his will. In those days the public executioner's sword was always wet with blood; men were tied to camels and torn asunder, but the desert-roads were everywhere safe and robbers met with no mercy. As an indication of his wealth and hospitality it is related that he constructed in the courtyard of his palace a stone-cistern of great size always kept filled with that best of Bedouin dainties, clarified butter (*dihn*). A bucket and rope were at hand and oil was dealt out as freely as water to the honored guests of the great ruler.

In the year 1886 the long-looked for opportunity came for Mohammed bin Rashid to complete the work of Telal. He not only aspired to be independent of the Riad rulers but to make Riad, the Saud dynasty and all the Wahabi state a dependency of his Nejd kingdom. In that year Amīr Abdullah bin Feysul was seized and imprisoned by two of his nephews, one of whom usurped the throne. Mohammed, as a loyal sub-

ject, marched to the rescue, deposed the pretender, but carried the Amir himself to Hail, leaving a younger brother as his deputy governor. The great empire of the Sauds was virtually ended, henceforth it was the green and purple banner of Rashid and not the red and white standard of the Wahabis that ruled all central Arabia.

Mohammed bin Rashid had shown supreme diplomatic ability in all his dealings with the Turks from the day of his power until his death. He humored their vanity by professing himself an ally of the Porte; he paid a small annual tribute to the Sherif of Mecca in recognition of the Sultan. But for the rest he never loved the Turk except at a good distance. None of the Arabs of the interior have forgotten the perfidy, treachery and more than Arab cruelty of the Egyptian Pashas in their campaigns.

In 1890 a final attempt was made by the partisans of the old dynasty to rebel against the Amir and secure the independence of Riad. It was fruitless; and the severe defeat of the rebels proved it final. In the year 1897 Mohammed bin Rashid died and his successor Abd-el-Aziz bin Mitaab now rules his vast dominions. He is less stern but not less able than his illustrious predecessor.

## THE RULERS OF OMAN

**B**EFORE we turn to the history of the Turks in Arabia a word is necessary regarding the rulers of Oman—that province unique in Arabia for its isolation from all the other provinces in the matter of politics. Prior to the appearance of the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf (1506) Oman had been governed for nine hundred successive years by independent rulers called Imams; elected by popular choice and not according to family descent. From that time until 1650 the Portuguese remained in power at Muscat. In 1741 Ahmed bin Said, a man of humble origin, a camel-driver, rose by his bravery to be governor of Sohar, drove the Persians who had succeeded the Portuguese, out of Muscat and founded the dynasty that has ever since ruled Oman. As early as 1798 the East India Company made a treaty with the Sultan of Muscat to exclude the French from Oman. This fact is important to show the character of the recent incident at Muscat.

Seyid Said, who ruled from 1804 to 1856, had constant struggles against the Wahabi power who threatened his territory. With England he joined the war against the Wahabi pirates, and made treaties in 1822, 1840 and 1845 to suppress the slave-trade. On the death of Said the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar was divided. Seyid Thowani reigned at Muscat while a younger brother reigned at Zanzibar. Thowani was assassinated at Sohar in 1866. Salim, his son, succeeded him, although he was suspected of patricide. Then there was an interregnum under a usurper until Seyid Turki another son of Said took the throne in 1871. Continual rebellion marked his period of rule. But he was friendly to the English and in re-

turn for the abolition of free traffic of slaves between Africa and Zanzibar the English government allowed him an annual subsidy of a little over £6,000 a year. In 1888 the Sultan died and his son, Feysul bin Turki, succeeded him. His rule was mild, from the palace at Muscat his influence was not far-reaching, rebellions, inter-tribal wars and plots of one mountain-chief against another mark all the years of his reign up to date. In February, 1895, there was a serious Bedouin uprising in which the Arabs took the town and looted it. The Sultan himself barely escaped and was for a time a prisoner in his fort while the town was in the hands of the enemy. The cause of the trouble was a difference as to the amount of yearly tribute a certain Sheikh Saleh of Samed should pay the Muscat ruler. From November, 1894, the rebels collected arms and strengthened their numbers until on February 12th of the following year they were ready to strike the desired blow. As this episode was characteristic of all Arab warfare we quote a brief account of it sent at the time by a resident at Muscat to the Bombay press :

“On February 12th Abdullah, the leader of his father's (Sheikh Saleh's) troops, with a retinue of perhaps 200 armed Bedouins arrived at Muscat in a scattered and peaceable manner, and obtained an audience with the Sultan. A musket salute was fired, and no attack was thought of. The Sultan presented the leader with a purse of \$400 and a liberal allowance of rice, dates, coffee, and the famous Muscat “halwa” for the men. The Bedouins although armed were allowed to go and come as they choose and no attack was feared. Sheikh Abdullah himself sat for a time in the bazaar and received the salaams of the people who kissed his hand in respect. When evening came the Sultan requested the men to encamp outside of the gates, the only means of entrance and exit through the old Portuguese walls. Although failing to comply with the request the Bedouins claimed none but peaceful intentions. At 8 P M when according to custom the gates were closed, per-



haps one-half of the Bedouins were within the walls. This was then Trojan horse. Shortly after midnight the gates were attacked, the few customary guards being easily overcome, and thrown open to the large numbers of Bedouins who up to this time had been hiding in a neighboring mosque. Both the small gate leading to the bazaar and the larger one to the west of the town were easily taken, and the Bedouins then advanced to the Sultan's palace, effected an entrance and rudely awoke the Sultan and his family from their sleep. Seyyidi Esel after a courageous struggle of a few minutes, (in which he shot two of the attacking party,) escaped by a small door opening to the sea and fled to one of the two forts which command the city as well as the harbor. His brother escaped to the other. Each of these forts is manned by a force of perhaps fifty men and has several old twelve pounder Portuguese guns.

"The forts opened fire at once upon the palace which the Bedouins now occupied. The Bedouins took possession of the town closing the gates and stationing armed men through the bazaar and streets in the early hours of the 13th of February.

"A few shops containing muskets and ammunition were opened, and the contents robbed. The Sultan's palace was completely looted and all his personal property either destroyed or sold at any price. On account of the suddenness of the attack there was but a small number of the Sultan's soldiers in readiness. These repaired to the forts and opened fire upon the Bedouin invaders with both the guns of the forts and muskets. For three days we were the witnesses of the extraordinary spectacle of a Sultan bombarding his own palace; no attempt was made to meet the rebels on the streets. By order of the invading captain the portion of the town inhabited by British subjects was not entered. Until Sunday evening things remained about the same. The attack from the forts was continued day and night. The Bedouins did not answer the fire but remained in the palace and streets holding possessions but making no attack on the forts. Within the town, although it is

in possession of the enemy, all was orderly and quiet. Unarmed people were allowed to pass to and fro and guards were stationed in the bazaar to prevent plunder. Reinforcements were expected by both parties. On Monday morning a body of about 1,000 arrived from the coast towns in aid of the Sultan. They encamped beneath the fort in command of the Sultan, and at about 8 A. M. made an attack on the invaders, which became so serious a danger to the British subjects that the Political Agent Major J. H. Sadler ordered a cessation of hostilities at 1 P. M. until 8 P. M. giving the British subjects an opportunity to sojourn to the sheltered village of Makalla. More reinforcements to the Sultan's troops arrived at 6 P. M. and encamped beneath the fort throwing temporary barricades across the streets at several advantageous points. The main body of the Bedouins were waiting to reinforce just outside Matral which village was however still in the hands of the Sultan. At 8 A. M. on Monday H. M. S. *Sphinx* arrived from Bushire and at 2 P. M. the R. I. M. S. *Lawrence*."

The British gunboats, contrary to the expectations and fond hopes of the population of Muscat, did not interfere in the matter. For reasons of diplomacy they left the Sultan to fight his own battles and when the rebels were finally persuaded to leave saddled the poor Sultan with a large bill for the damage incurred by British subjects during the attack.

In 1894 a French consulate was established at Muscat; as the French have no commerce to speak of in this part of the world the object of the consulate was evidently political. Of the intrigues that resulted, the alleged sale of a coaling-station to France and the British attitude toward the matter we will speak later.

## XXI

### THE STORY OF THE TURKS IN ARABIA

"No one travels in Turkey with his eyes open without seeing that her government is a curse on mankind. Fears, feuds and fightings make miserable the councils of her rulers. They are bloodsuckers fastened on the people throughout her dominions drawing from each and all the last drop of blood that can be extracted. Turkey skillfully and systematically represses what Christian nations make it their business to nurture in all mankind as manhood. In her cities there are magnificent palaces for her sultans and her favorites. But one looks in vain through her realm for statues of public benefactors. There are no halls where her citizens could gather to discuss policies of government or mutual obligations. Their few newspapers are emasculated by government censors. Not a book in any language can cross her borders without permission of public officers, most of whom are incapable of any intelligent judgment of its contents. Art is scorned. Education is bound. Freedom is a crime. The tax gatherer is omnipotent. Law is a farce. Turkey has prisons instead of public halls for the education of her people. Instruments of torture are the stimulus to their industries."—*The Congregationalist*, April 8, 1897.

IN reviewing the story of the Turks in Arabia, we will begin with Hejaz, the most important province of Turkey in Arabia, continue with Yemen, the most populous, and end with the Mesopotamian vilayets which were her richest possessions.

It is not generally understood how highly the Sultan values his Arabian provinces. It is on them and on them alone that he can base his claim to the title of caliph. The possession of the Holy Cities in the hands of the Sultan makes him the chief Mohammedan ruler; there his name is blessed daily in the great mosques; in the eyes of all the pilgrims from every

part of the Moslem world Turkey is the guardian of the Kaaba. How many thousands of Mohammedans daily in the mosques of India and Java call for blessings on the head of Abd-ul-Hamid the Caliph who would never pray for Abd-ul-Hamid the Sultan.

Mecca, and Hejaz generally, was governed by the early Caliphs until 980 A. D., when it passed under the rule of the first Sherif, Jaafar<sup>1</sup>. Under Suleiman the magnificent (1520-1566) the Ottoman Empire reached the zenith of its power and greatness; at that time Arabia too was reckoned a Turkish possession, and the entire peninsula was included on the maps of Turkish Asia. But, as we have seen, at the beginning of the present century the Wahabis and not the Turks were the real rulers of Arabia. The Arabs have never taken kindly to the rule of the Turk, but the province of Hejaz, once snatched from the hand of the Wahabis, has ever since been held by the Sublime Porte. Plots of rebellion have been thick and Sherifs have succeeded Sherifs but the fort that frowns over Mecca has always a strong Turkish garrison and the Pashas eat the fat of the land at the expense of the people.

Actual Turkish rule was declared over the whole of Hejaz in 1840. At that time Abd-el-Mutalib was made Great Sherif of Mecca, but there was continual trouble between the Sherif and the Pasha. The religious head of the holy city would not bow to the political head, the anti-slave trade regulations although only very slightly enforced caused riots. The Sherif was deposed and Mohammed bin 'Aun declared ruler in his place. On June 15th, 1858, the murder of certain Christians at Jiddah brought England into collision with the rulers of Hejaz. Jiddah was bombarded and the gate to the holy city was held by the Christian powers until the required indemnity was paid and the murderers punished. The next Sherif appointed was Abdullah. During his time the

<sup>1</sup> The history of Mecca under these Sherifs is given by Snouck Hurgronje at length in his "Mekka."

opening of the Suez Canal brought Turkey much nearer to Mecca and inspired the religious zealots with the fear that now the Christian fleets would attack the whole coast of Hejaz! For had not the vizier of Haroun el Rashid dissuaded that monarch from his plan to dig the canal lest the gateway to the Holy Cities would then be too accessible to the infidels?

The Ottoman government introduced other horrors into the quiet seclusion of the ancient city of Mecca; Jiddah was connected with the Red Sea cable, a wire carried the world to Mecca and put the Pasha in daily touch with the Sublime Porte, afterward it was extended to Taif, and the Turks were masters of their own army corps, so that the Sherifs could not act in secret. It was even attempted to raise a Meccan regiment for the Russian war.

In 1869 the whole complicated bureaucratic system was introduced at Medina, Jiddah, Mecca and Taif. Abdullah was a great favorite as Sherif, both to the Arabs and the Turks; he was mild and given to all sorts of compromise so that he managed to please both parties which are always at war in Mecca. His brother Husein succeeded as Sherif but was murdered in 1880. In the same year the aged Abd-el-Mutalib for the third time became Sherif and although at first very popular he soon won the hatred of the conservative Meccans by his cruelty and of the Turks by his double-dealing. On request of the people of Mecca for his deposition, Othman Pasha came to Hejaz and although he did not depose the aged Sherif, managed to outwit him in governing the city. In 1882 Aun-el-Rafik, a brother of Husein, became Sherif. Troubles between the dual powers of government became thick and the Bedouin tribes took the occasion for a general uprising. Rafik fled to Medina and could not return until Othman Pasha was deposed. Since then the old struggle continues.

The Arabs in Hejaz have no love for the Turks or for any Turkish ruler, the Bedouin tribes hate the very sight of a red

fez and the town-dweller is ground down with taxation. Aside from militarism there have been no public improvements in either of the Holy Cities since the Star and Crescent waved from their forts. The "pantaloon-wearing" Turks are considered little better than "Christian dogs" by the pious folk of Mecca. Have they not introduced the abomination of quarantine instead of the old time simple trust in Allah? Have they not acquiesced to the residence of Christian consuls at Jiddah? And what is worse, have they not interfered with the free importation of slaves and the manufacture of eunuchs for the residents of Mecca?

The following literal translation of a placard posted everywhere in Mecca, at the end of the year 1885, may give the best insight into the relations that exist between the Turk and the Arab in the cradle of Islam:

"And who does not rule according to the revelation of Allah he is an infidel."—*Koran* v. 48.

"Be it known to you, ye people of Mecca, that this accursed Wali intends to introduce Turkish laws into the holy city of Allah, therefore beware of sloth and awake from sleep. Do not suffer the laws to be executed for they are only the opening of the door to further legislation. Our proof is that the Wali Othman Pasha proposed his plan to divide Mecca into four quarters and to appoint three officers for each quarter. This plan he laid before the city council and when they declared it was impossible to do this in Mecca the accused replied, Is Mecca better than Constantinople? We will carry the plan through by force. For this reason, O Meccans, an association has been formed called the Moslem Club and whoever desires to enter it let him make inquiries. The object of the association is to assassinate this cursed Wali and his chief of police. He who cannot join us let him utter his complaint before Allah in the holy house that the public safety is endangered while the present ruler lives. And this cursed Wali also attempts to secure the administration of the annual corn-shipment from Egypt. And remember also how the accursed butchered the sons of the Sherif and his slaves and exposed their heads at Mecca. What sort of deeds are these? More atrocious than those at Zeer. So that whoever kills this man will enter paradise without rendering an account. The purpose of dividing

the city appointing Sheikhs for each quarter is nothing else than a pretext for new taxations as the Cursed himself let out before the council

“In the name of the

“JEMIAT-EL-ISLANIYEH”

The same people who promised paradise to the murderer of Othman Pasha rebelled against his successor Safwet Pasha and will rebel as long as the character of the Meccan remains what it is. Those who dream that the Turk will make Mecca the centre of their power when Constantinople falls, know not the condition of affairs among the proud fanatics of Hejaz who will never allow Mecca to become anything but the city of the Sherifs. And as for the Bedoun tribes, they blackmail every pilgrim caravan and draw heavy subsidies from Constantinople to keep the peace. Jiddah is in decay and the pilgrim-traffic is not as flourishing as it was a decade ago. Even in Hejaz the days of Ottoman rule are numbered.

Between Hejaz and Yemen is the region of Asir. Its population has been celebrated from the earliest times for personal bravery and courage. Mountain-dwellers they love freedom; belonging to the Zaidee sect they hate the Sunnites. And these two reasons united made them abominate the Turks. In order to extend Ottoman power southward and reconquer Yemen for the Sublime Porte it was necessary to pass through the territory of the Asir Arabs. From 1824 to 1827 the Turkish troops carried six successive campaigns against the brave highlanders but were in every case repulsed with great loss. In 1833 and 1834 the attempt was again made, a desperate battle was fought on August 21st of the latter year, the Turkish troops were victorious. But the Arabs rallied, made sorties on the garrisons, famine reigned, fever killed off many and in September the Turks again withdrew, defeated. In 1836 a final attempt was made to conquer Asir; this was with greater loss than ever before. To this day the entire region between Taiz and Roda (a few miles north of Sana) is really independent, although marked as Turkish on the maps. The Ottoman troops are bold

to fight the Yemen Arabs to the very gate of Sana but they grow pale when they hear of an expedition against the dare-devil Bedouins of Asir who fight with the ferocity of the American Indian and the boldness of a Scotch Highlander.

The story of the Turks in Yemen is very modern. In 1630 they were compelled to evacuate Yemen by the Arabs and they did not set foot in the capital again until 1873. In 1871 the Imam of Yemen lived his life in peace, secluded and sensual like an oriental despot in the palace at Sana. Looked upon by the Arabs as a spiritual Sultan he was great, but also powerless to hold in check the depredations and robberies of the many tribes under his nominal sway. Things went from bad to worse. Trade almost ceased on account of the attacks on the caravans that left for the coast. The Sana merchants, quiet and respectable Arabs, saw nothing but ruin before them, and considering solely the benefits that would accrue to themselves by such a step invited the Turks to take the place. They did not consult the large agricultural population or the effect of Turkish rule on the peasantry, otherwise there would have been an equally cordial invitation to the Turks to stay out of Yemen.

The Turks needed no urging at this time, when they were strengthening their hold on Mesopotamia, extending their conquests in Hassa and trying to obtain the mastery of the Hejaz Bedouins. It fell in most admirably with their plans, and an expedition set out at once. In March, 1872, an army under command of Ahmed Mukhtar Pasha reached Hodeidah. On April 25th the army entered Sana twenty thousand strong and the city opened its gates without a battle. The conquest of the country now proceeded; a force was sent to the region of Kaukeban, north of Sana, another to the southern district of Anes and still another to Taiz and Mocha. The conquest toward the south was limited by the presence of England at Aden. For when the Turkish army advanced to the domain of the independent Sultan of Lahaj who had a treaty with England, the British Resident at Aden sent a small force of artillery and



cavalry to occupy the Lahaj territory. In consequence of representations made at the same time by the English government to the Sublime Porte, the Turkish army withdrew in December, 1873. In 1875 the tribes bordering the southern boundary of Yemen rebelled against Turkey but the rebellion was crushed.

When the army took Sana the Imam was deposed, but on account of his religious influence over the Arabs was permitted to reside in the city, receiving a pension on condition that he would exert himself in behalf of Ottoman rule. This he fulfilled until his death when the birthright as Imam passed to his relative Ahmed-ed-Din who also was nothing loth to receive the honor of the Arabs and the money of the Turks.

Sana received a certain amount of civilization, more prestige and still more commercial prosperity than in the older days. As for the country in general it was divided and subdivided into provincial districts and sub-districts; the peasantry were taxed and taxed again, military roads were constructed by forced labor. The hill-tribes, who in the times of the Imam had been left undisturbed in their agriculture and who boasted an independence of centuries, were now little better than slaves. Extortion ruined them, they hated the personality of the Turks whose religion was not as their own; discontent smouldered everywhere and was ready to burst into a flame. And this discontent was increased from year to year as the caravan-drivers returned from their long journeys to Aden and told of the greatest marvel ever heard of—a righteous government and a place where justice could not be *bought*, but belonged to every one—even the black skinned ignorant Somali. When we remember that over 300,000 camels with their drivers enter Aden from the north every year we can realize how widespread was this news. I can testify to the worldwide difference between the municipal government of Aden cantonment and that of the capital of Yemen under the Turks as I saw it in 1891. When the Turks accused England of fomenting the recent rebellions in Yemen

they were right to the extent that if the Yemen peasantry had not seen the blessed union of liberty and law at Aden they would not seek to rise against the Turks

In the summer of 1892 a body of 400 Turkish troops were sent to collect by force the taxes due from the Bni Meruan who inhabit the coast north of Hodeidah. The Turks were surprised by a large body of Arabs and nearly annihilated. Wherever the news travelled the people rose in arms. Tribal banners long laid away were unfurled and the cry "long live the Imam" rang through mountain and valley. A new Jihad was proclaimed and Ahmed-ed-Din was unwillingly forced to take the leadership against the Turks. When the rebellion broke out the Turks had only about 15,000 men in the whole of Yemen; and cholera had wrought havoc among these. Ill-fed, ill-clothed, and unpaid, badly housed in the rainy and cold mountain villages, they could nevertheless fight like devils when led by their commanders. The Imam escaped from Sana, and a few days later the capital was besieged by an enormous force of Arabs. All the unwalled cities fell an easy prey to the rebels, Menakha was taken after a short struggle, Ibb, Jibleh, Taiz, and Yerin all declared themselves for the Imam. The Arabs treated their foes with respect after their victory,<sup>1</sup> they were feeding Turkish prisoners at the Imam's expense and in many cases money was given the soldiers to enable them to escape to Aden.

Meanwhile telegrams were sent to Constantinople from Sana and Hodeidah beseeching assistance. The whole of Yemen, with the exception of the capital and two smaller towns in the north with Hodeidah on the coast was in the hands of the rebels. An expedition reached Hodeidah, under command of Ahmed Feizi Pasha, formerly governor of Mecca, which after bombarding the villages on the coast north of Hodeidah, marched to the relief of Sana. Without opposition the army

<sup>1</sup> This is according to the testimony of Walter B Harris who was in Yemen shortly after the rebellion

reached Menakha and took the town by storm, match-locks and fuse-guns could not hold out against field-guns and trained troops. About thirty miles beyond a desperate attempt was made to stop the army of relief, in a narrow defile the rebels under Seyid es-Sherai took up their position and for twelve days withstood cavalry, infantry and artillery assaults, then they were driven back and retired into the mountains. By hurried marches the troops reached Sana and took the city. Military law was proclaimed and a universal massacre of prisoners took place. A reward was offered for the head of every rebel. Camel-loads of heads were brought into Sana every day. The troops were turned loose to plunder the villages. There is no nation in the world that can put down a rebellion as rapidly as the Turks when they have a good-sized army, but they have great objection to any one seeing the process.

By the end of January, 1893, all the cities of Yemen were reconquered and the main roads were again open. But the spirit of rebellion lived on and the brave mountaineers withdrew to the inaccessible defiles and peaks only to plot further mischief. Telegraph-wires were cut; soldiers were shot on the road; and once and again bold attempts were made to blow up the Pasha's house in Sana with gunpowder. In 1895 there was rebellion in the north. In 1897-98 all Yemen was again in arms and the uncertain and conflicting reports that reach the coast only emphasize the serious character of the uprising.

On the map and in Turkish official reports the boundaries of Yemen join those of Hejaz and extend many miles *east* of Sana. This has never been and is not now correct. Twenty-five miles north and east of Sana there is no one who cares for a Turkish passport or dares to collect Turkish taxes.

As to the future of Turkey in Yemen it is difficult to surmise. Rather than risk further rebellions the Sultan may adopt a conciliatory policy. But Yemen is too far from Con-

stantinople to be governed from there Extortion is the only way open to a Pasha to enrich himself and for soldiers to get daily bread where wages are not paid on time When the Pasha has filled his pocket his successor will try it a second time and come to grief. Rebellion will be the chronic state of Yemen as long as Turkey rules at Sana. The leopard cannot change his spots.

We now turn to notice the rule of the Turks in Northeastern Arabia, and in their newly-acquired province of Hassa Bagdad was taken by the Turks in 1638 and that city has ever since been the capital of a Turkish Province It is unnecessary to enter here into the succession of Pashas and rulers and the attempts to subjugate the Bedoun Arabs In 1830 the great plague visited all Mesopotamia and when epidemic was at its height the river burst its banks and in one night 15,000 people perished In 1884 the vilayet of Busrah was separated from that of Bagdad and has since remained under its own governor The two provinces have all the machinery of Ottoman rule in working order. Except for an occasional outbreak among the Montefik Arabs, Turkey has no trouble to hold Mesopotamia in her grasp. Nor is she at all willing that this rich province should even dream of passing under other rulers. In the year 1891 the Turkish Official Bulletin gave the total revenue from taxation in the Bagdad vilayet alone at 246,304 Turkish pounds.

It may be interesting to note in passing the various sources of taxation-money. They are in brief tax on Arab tents, exemption from military service, tax on sheep, buffaloes, camels, tax on mines (salt), tax on special privileges, tax on forests and timber, tax on fishing, custom dues, tax on shipping, on irrigation, on farming improvements, "receipts from tribunals" (£3,000 tax on justice<sup>1</sup>) and beside all this "taxes diverses" and "revenues diverses" to make up the budget. All this is legal, ordinary taxation But the actual conditions of Turkish misrule made it impossible to exercise the inalienable rights of

“life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” without continual backsheesh to every official

The population of Mesopotamia, Moslem and Jew and Christian are thoroughly weary of Turkish misrule, but no one dares to lift up a voice in protest. They have become accustomed to it; and there is nothing else but to bear it patiently. As for the nomads they have either, like the Montefik, settled down along the rivers to cultivate the soil and eke out a miserable existence, or, like the Aneyza and Shammar tribes, they are as thoroughly independent of the Sultan as when they first appeared in his borders.

Turkish Arabia on the north is represented on most maps by a regular curved line starting from the Persian Gulf and ending at the Gulf of Akaba, but the line is purely imaginary. Turkish rule does not extend far south of the banks of the Euphrates, and the whole desert region from Kerbela to the Dead Sea and the Hauran is practically independent.<sup>1</sup> Outside of Bagdad and Busrah even the river towns are frequently threatened by the nomads, and Turkish soldiers have often to guard the river steamers against pirates. Military rule is in vogue two hundred years after the occupation of the country, and the nomads are nomads still. The commander-in-chief of the Sixth Ottoman army corps resides at Bagdad, and a good number of soldiers occupy the barracks in the city of the old caliphs.

In Turkey all Moslems over twenty years of age are liable to military conscription, and this liability continues for over twenty years. Non-Moslems pay an annual exemption tax of about six shillings per head. The army consists of *Nizam* or regulars, *Redif* or reserves, and *Mustahfiz* or national guard. The infantry are supposed to be all armed with Martini-Peabody rifles, but in Mesopotamia older patterns are still in use. The life of a Turkish soldier is not enviable, and none of them would be volunteers for government service. The Turkish

<sup>1</sup> See Lady Ann Blunt's "Bedouins of the Euphrates."

navy is represented in the Persian Gulf and on the rivers by one or two third-rate cruisers and a small river gunboat

The result of the calling of Turkey into the Wahabi quarrel between the two sons of Feysul, was the occupation of Katif and Hassa by the Ottoman government. Since that time (1872) Hassa has been a part of the Busrah vilayet, and the Pasha, who resides at Hofhoof, has the title Mutaserif Pasha of Nejd. Continual troubles with the Arabs mark the history of the occupation of Hassa, the caravan routes are not as safe as in the dominions of the Amir of Nejd, the whole country shows decay and lack of government, taxation of the pearl fishers has driven many of them to Bahrein, the peninsula of Katar is occupied by a garrison, but that does not prevent continual blood feuds and battles between the Arab tribes. The Ottoman government has established an overland post-service between Hofhoof and Busrah has between Bagdad and Damascus, but both routes are unsafe and slow. Most of the Hofhoof merchants use the British Post Office at Bahrein; and so do the government officials.



## XXII

### BRITISH INFLUENCE IN ARABIA

"The English, said the old Arab Sheikh in reply, are like ants, if one finds a bit of meat, a hundred follow."—*Ainsworth*.

"Oman may, indeed, be justifiably regarded as a British dependency. We subsidize its ruler, we dictate its policy, we should tolerate no alien interference. I have little doubt myself that the time will come . . . when the Union Jack will be seen flying from the castles of Muscat."

"I should regard the concession of a port upon the Persian Gulf to Russia by any power as a deliberate insult to Great Britain, as a wanton rupture of the *status quo* and as an international provocation to war, and I should impeach the British minister, who was guilty of acquiescing in such surrender, as a traitor to his country."

—*Lord Curzon*, Viceroy of India.

IN sketching the relations of England to the peninsula, we will consider her Arabian possessions and protectorates; her supremacy in Arabian waters, her commerce with Arabia; her treaties with Arab tribes, and her consulates and agencies in Arabia.

Of all British possessions in Arabia, Aden is by far the most important, on account of its strategic position as the key not only of all Yemen, but of the Red Sea and all Western Arabia. Aden was visited as early as 1609 by Captain Sharkey of the East India Company's ship "Ascension." He was at first well received, but afterward imprisoned until the inhabitants had secured a large ransom. Two of the Englishmen on board refusing to pay were sent to the Pasha at Sana. In 1610 an English ship again visited Aden and the crew were treacherously treated. In 1820, Captain Haines of the Indian navy

visited Aden, and in 1829 the Court of Directors entertained the idea of making Aden a coaling-station, but the idea was abandoned. In consequence of an outrage committed on the passengers and crew of a buggalow wrecked near Aden, an expedition was despatched against the place by the Bombay government in 1838. It was arranged that the peninsula of Aden should be ceded to the British. But the negotiations were anything but friendly, and in January, 1839, a force of 300 Europeans and 400 native troops in the "Volage" and "Cruizer" bombarded and took the place by storm.

This was the first new accession of territory in the reign of Queen Victoria. Immense sums of money have been spent in fortifying this natural Gibraltar and in improving its harbor. Four times the Arabs have attempted to take Aden by land, each time with fearful loss and without success. By sea Aden is impregnable, only the initiated know the strength of its mole-batteries, mines, forts and other defences, and every year new defences are constructed and old ones strengthened. Aden has become a great centre for trade, and is one of the chief coaling depots in the world. It bars the further advance of Turkey into South Arabia, guarantees independence and good government to all the neighboring petty states, and is an example of good government to all Arabia and the African coast. The settlement is politically subject to the Bombay Presidency and is administered by a Resident with two assistants. Since the opening of the Suez canal, trade has steadily increased and Turkish custom extortions at Hodeidah direct the caravan trade more and more to Aden from every part of Yemen.

The island of Socotra and the Kuria Muria islands are also attached to Aden, together with the Somali Coast in Africa. Socotra has an area of 1,382 square miles and about 10,000 inhabitants. It came under British protection in 1886 by treaty with its Sultan. The Kuria Muria group was ceded to the British by the Sultan of Muscat, for the purpose of landing the Red Sea cable, the islands are five in number and have rich



guano deposits The island of Kamaran is also classed as belonging to the British Empire <sup>1</sup> It is a small island in the Red Sea, some miles north of Hodeidah, it is only fifteen miles long and five wide, and has seven small fishing-villages. But it has a good sheltered anchorage and is the quarantine Station for all Moslem pilgrims from the south to Mecca

The Bahrein Islands are also included in the British Empire, although Turkey still claims them as her own and the native ruler imagines that he is independent "The present chief Sheikh Isa owes the possession of his throne entirely to British protection which was instituted in 1867. Sheikh Isa was again formerly placed under British protection in 1870 when his rivals were deported to India." The Political Resident at Bushire superintends the government of the islands to as great an extent as is deemed diplomatic.

Perim at the southern end of the Red Sea was taken possession of in 1799 by the East India Company and a force was sent from Bombay to garrison the island. But it was found untenable at that time as a military position and the troops were withdrawn Perim was reoccupied in the beginning of 1857 The lighthouse was completed in 1861, and quarters were built for a permanent garrison.<sup>2</sup>

We may also consider the possessions of Egypt in Arabia as practically under English protection Since the British occupation, the peninsula of Sinai and the Red Sea litoral on the Arabian side, nearly as far as Yembo is under the Governor-General of the Suez canal.

England not only possesses the key positions on the coasts of Arabia, but has for many years held the naval supremacy in all Arabian waters As the Dutch succeeded the Portuguese and established trading-stations in the Persian Gulf and in the Red Sea, so England followed the Dutch. The East India Com-

<sup>1</sup> Statesman's Year Book

<sup>2</sup> For a complete account of Perim, see "The Description and History of Perim," by J. S. King, Bombay, 1877.

pany was at Aden and Mocha in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and in 1754 the English East India Company established itself at Bunder Rig, north of Bushire, and later at Bushire itself, supplanting the Dutch. The island of Karak in the north of the Gulf was twice occupied by the British, in 1838 and in 1853. After the bombardment of Bushire in 1857 and of Mohammerah in the same year, hostilities ceased and Karak was again evacuated. The island of Kishm, in the southern part of the Gulf, was during the greater part of the present century, a British military or naval station. The Indian naval squadron had its headquarters first at El Kishm, then at Deristan and finally for many years at Bassadore. In 1879 because of the insalubrity of the climate the last company of Sepoys was withdrawn to India. But the island is still in a sense considered British. As early as 1622 the Persians and the British expelled the Portuguese from Oimuz and shortly after, in common with the Dutch and French set up trading factories at Gombrun, (now Bunder Abbas). In 1738 the English Company established an agency at Busrah and much of their Gulf business was shifted to that port. Since 1869 there has been a telegraph station at Jask with a staff of six English officials, here the land and marine wires of the Indo-European telegraph meet and join India to the Gulf.

The Sultanate of Oman, since 1822, has been in the closest relations possible with British naval power. At several critical periods in Oman history, it was Great Britain that helped to settle the affairs of state. In 1861 a British commissioner arbitrated between two claimants for the rule of Muscat and Zanzibar, then one kingdom, and divided the Sultanate. Since 1873 the Sultan of Muscat has received an annual subsidy from the British government. Near Cape Musendum, on the Arabian side of the Gulf, the British once occupied a place called Malcolm's Inlet when they were laying the telegraph cable from Kerachi to the Gulf in 1864. Five years later it was transferred to Jask. From 1805 to 1821 there were British

naval encounters with the pirates of the Gulf, and since that date all piracy in these waters has ceased.<sup>1</sup> British naval supremacy established peace at Bahrein and has protected its native government since 1847. When in 1867 the native ruler, "a crafty old fox" as Curzon calls him, broke the treaty, the bombardment of Menamah brought further proof of British naval supremacy. Kuwait was for a time (1821-22) the headquarters of the British Resident at Busrah; and, semi-independent of Turkey, is now becoming wholly dependent on England—another indication of British naval supremacy. Even at Fao, Busrah and Bagdad British gunboats often keep the peace or at least emphasize authority. In a word Great Britain holds the scales of justice for all the Persian Gulf littoral. She guarantees a *pax Britannica* for commerce, she taught the Arab tribes that rapine and robbery are not a safe religion; where they once swept the sea with slave-dhows and pirate-craft they have now settled down to drying fish and diving for pearls. For the accomplishment of this subject England has spent much both in treasure and in lifeblood. Witness the graves of British soldiers and marines in so many Gulf ports. The testimony of an outsider, is given in a recent article in the *Cologne Gazette*, which thus describes the political and naval supremacy of England in Eastern Arabia and the Persian Gulf:

"A disguised protectorate over Oman and control over the actions of the Sultan of Muscat, actual protectorate over Bahrein, coaling station on the island of Kishm, in the Straits of Ormuz; presence of a political Resident at Bushire who, with the help of an association called the Trucial League, decides all disputes between Turkish, Arab, and Persian chiefs in the Persian Gulf . . . This league gives the English a constant pretext for intervention, the object of keeping peace and policing the gulf is only a pretence . . . All events on the Persian Gulf, however disconnected apparently, are really

<sup>1</sup> Treaties were made with the Arabs of the pirate coast in 1835, 1838, 1839, 1847, 1853, and 1856, of these we shall speak later.

dependent on each other through the Trucial League. It is a confused tangle of hatreds and jealousies whose threads are united in the hands of the Resident at Bushire. . . . Russia shows an indifference which is quite incomprehensible considering the interest she has and must have in these affairs. One could recount numerous instances where English agents have injured Russian interests without meeting with any opposition. The Russian Consul in Bagdad is thrust into the background by the activity of his British colleague. Southern Persia, the gulf, Eastern Arabia, and the Land of Oman have fallen completely within the English sphere of influence. This state of affairs has not been officially ratified, but exists as a fact. That will last till some movement comes about to restore the proper balance. Meanwhile, the English are the masters. They are so accustomed to manage the whole Persian Gulf that if the least thing occurs that they have not foreseen or themselves arranged they completely lose all self-control."

But the supremacy of England in the Gulf and on the other coasts of Arabia is hers not only because of gunboats and gunpowder. It is most of all by the arts of peace that she has established and glorified her power on the Arabian littoral. It must never be forgotten, for example, that the magnificent surveys of the entire 4,000 miles of Arabian coast were the work of British and Indian naval officers; by means of this survey, completed at great cost, commerce has been aided and navigation of the dangerous waters east and west of Arabia has been made safe. England too is the only power that has established lighthouses; *e g*, at Aden, Perim, in the Red Sea and lately on Socotra. England laid the cables that circle Arabia; from India to Bushire and Fao connecting with the Turkish overland telegraph system; from Aden to Bombay and from Aden to Suez through the Red Sea. These cables were not the work of a day but were laid with great expense and opposed by the very governments they were intended to benefit.

Again, Arabia has two postal systems and two only. In the Turkish province of Yemen there is a weekly post between the capital and the chief towns to the coast, in Hejaz there is a post to Mecca; and in Mesopotamia and Hasa there is another Turkish postal system notorious for its slowness and insecurity. For the rest all of Eastern and Southern Arabia are dependent on the Indian Postal system, the whole interior is ignorant of a post office or of a postman. The government of India has post offices at Muscat, Bahrein, Fao, Busiah and Bagdad with regular mail service, and the best administration in the world. The English post carries the bulk of the mail between Busrah and Bagdad while Bahrein is really the post office for all Eastern Arabia; pearl-merchants at Katar and in Hasa mail their letters at Bahrein and even the Turkish government needs the English post to communicate with Busiah from Hasa.

England has also earned her supremacy in Arabian waters by honest attempts to put a stop to the slave-trade, in accord with the Anti-slave Trade treaties between the powers. She is the only power whose navy has acted in seizing slave-dhows, liberating slaves and patrolling the coast. The work has not always been done thoroughly or vigorously, but that it has been done at all, places England first among the powers that sail in Arabian waters.

Where the Union Jack proclaims naval supremacy, there the red mercantile flag of England follows the blue and carries commerce; the two go together, and although of different color are the same flag to Englishmen. The world-wide commercial activity of Great Britain has touched every part of the Arabian coast and British wares from Manchester and Birmingham have penetrated to every secluded village of Nejd, and are found in every valley of Yemen.

The mercantile navigation of the Gulf as it now exists is the creation of the last thirty years, and is largely to be attributed to the statesmanship of Sir Bartle Frere. It was he who,

when at Calcutta as a member of Lord Canning's Supreme Council, befriended the young Scotchman, William Mackinnon, who was planning a new shipping business beyond his slender means, and a subsidy was granted to Mackinnon's new line of Steamers. Thus it was that the British India Steam Navigation Company was launched which first opened trade not only with Zanzibar but in the Persian Gulf. In 1862 not a single mercantile steamer ploughed the Persian Gulf. A six-weekly service was then started, followed by a monthly, a fortnightly and finally by a weekly steamer. From Busrah there are two lines of English steamers direct for London. The British India was the pioneer line and still holds the first position, although there are other lines that do coasting trade with India.

Thus English commerce controls not only the markets of both sides of the Gulf, but of all Northwestern Arabia and as far beyond Bagdad as piece-goods and iron-ware can be carried on camels. There is not a spool of thread in Nejd or a jack-knife in Jebel-Shammar that did not come up the Persian Gulf in an English ship. All of Hassa eats rice from Rangoon and thousands of bags are carried in British ships to Bahrein to be transported inland by caravan. Not only is the steamshipping mostly in English hands, but many of the native buggalows fly the British flag and the chief merchants are Englishmen or British subjects from India. The Rupee is the standard of value along the whole Arabian coast from Aden to Busrah. In the interior the Maria Theresa dollar has long held sway, but even that is becoming scarce among the Bedouins and they have little preference between the "*abu bint*" (the Rupee with a girl's head) and the "*abu tair*" ("the father of a bird"—the eagle on the Austrian dollar). For a time a French line of steamers ran in the Gulf but the project was abandoned, though there is now a rumour of its revival.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The British India steamer, carry the mails and leave Bombay and Busrah once a week, touching at the intermediate ports in the Gulf, after

Aden is the commercial centre for all Southern Arabia and the enormous increase of its trade since 1839 is proof of what English commerce has done for Yemen. Mocha is dead, and Hodeidah is long since bed-ridden, but Aden is alive and only requires a railroad to Sana to become the commercial capital of all Western and Southern Arabia. That railroad will be built as soon as the Turk leaves Yemen's capital, God hasten the day. After the occupation of Aden in 1839 until the year 1850 customs dues were levied as in India but at that time it was declared a free port. During the first seven years the total value of imports and exports averaged per year about 1,900,000 Rupees, in the next seven years the annual average rose to 6,000,000 Rupees, and it has been on the increase ever since, until it now is over 30,000,000 Rupees; nor did this annual average include the trade by land which is also large.

The Suez canal is another indication of the prestige which English commerce has in the Red Sea and along the routes of traffic that circle Arabia. In 1893 the gross tonnage that passed through the canal was 10,753,798, of this 7,977,728 tons passed under the English flag which means that nearly four-fifths of the trade is English. In the same year the number of vessels passing through the canal was 3,341 of which 2,405 belonged to Great Britain.

The proposed Anglo-Egyptian railway across the north of Arabia will join the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. To shorten the time of communication between England and her Eastern Empire is evidently a matter of the highest importance, not only for commerce and post, but in the event of war, mutiny or other great emergency. The first surveys for this overland railway were made as early as 1850, by the Euphrates Expedition under General Chesney. The scheme was warmly advocated

Kerachi, as follows: Gwadar, Muscat, Jask, Bunder Abbas, Lingah, Bahrain, Bushire, Fao and Mohammediah, the journey lasts a fortnight and the distance, zigzag, is about one thousand nine hundred miles.

in England by Sir W P Andriew, the Duke of Sutherland and others, but although it still awaits execution the plan comes up again every few years with new advocates and new improvements. Once it was to be the Euphrates Valley railway coming down to Bagdad and Busrah or to Kuwait (Grane) by way of Mosul. Now the plan proposed is to open a railway from Port Said due eastward across the Peninsula along the thirtieth parallel of latitude to Busrah. A branch would deviate a little to the south to the port of Kuwait which was also the proposed terminus of the Euphrates Valley line on which a select committee of the House of Commons sat twenty-five years ago. From Busrah the main line would cross the Shatt-el-Arab and the Karun by swing-bridges and follow the coast-line of the Persian Gulf and Makran to Kerachi. Such a line would reduce the time occupied in transit between London and Kerachi to eight days<sup>1</sup>. Whether this route or any other is followed is a matter of minor importance. The fact that since 1874 England has been to the front in the matter of the overland railroad puts it beyond a doubt, that when the railway is built its terminus at least will be under English control and most probably the whole road will represent English capital and enterprise.

Meanwhile there is intelligence that Turkey has made a concession to German capitalists for the extension of the Anatolian railways to Bagdad. The line which runs from the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus to Angora is in the hands of a German syndicate and the terms of the concession contain compulsory clauses under which, in certain eventualities, the Turkish government can compel the syndicate to extend the road to Sivas and ultimately to Bagdad.<sup>2</sup> But politically Great Britain

<sup>1</sup> In a recent paper read before the Society of Arts in London Mr. C. E. D. Black of the Geographical Department of the India office urges other reasons for the practicability of this route.—(London *Times*, May 7th, 1898.)

<sup>2</sup> *Times of India*, June 17, 1899.



has little to fear from the spread of German influence in the Levant and Mesopotamia. The editor of an influential English paper says, "Every mark expended by the Germans upon public works in the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan helps to build up the bulwark against the menace of Russia. And the creation of a German railway in Asia Minor will, in a limited degree tend to identify the interests of Germany and Great Britain." Nevertheless England would never grant a terminus or harbor to a German railroad syndicate on the Persian Gulf.

Great Britain has treaties or agreements of some sort with every tribe and settlement of Arabs from Aden to Muscat and thence to Bahrein. England has two kings for Arabia, the first lives at Bushire and is called the British Resident and Consul General, the other with a similar title lives at Aden. Of the Bushire Resident Lord Curzon wrote, "One or more gunboats are at the disposal of the British Resident at Bushire who has also a despatch boat for his own immediate use in the event of any emergency. Not a week passes but, by Persians and Arabs alike, disputes are referred to his arbitration, and he may with greater truth than the phrase sometimes conveys be entitled the Uncrowned King of the Persian Gulf." To the energy and political capacity of Colonel Ross and his capable predecessor, Sir Lewis Pelly, this royal throne owes its foundation. All the treaties made by England with the Arab tribes on the Eastern coast of Arabia are here interpreted and enforced.

The treaties made with the chiefs of Bahrein and with the tribes on the so-called Pirate coast embraces clauses to enforce the maritime peace of the Gulf, to exclude foreign powers from the possession of territory, to regulate or abolish the slave-traffic and to put down piracy. Since 1820 various treaties of truce have been concluded with the warlike Arabs on the coast south of Katar and have been frequently renewed or strengthened. In 1853 a Treaty of Perpetual Peace was made

with other tribes<sup>1</sup> which provided that there should be a complete cessation of hostilities at sea and that all disputes should be referred to the British Resident. The contracting parties were called Tribal Chiefs and the treaty is known as the Tribal Arrangement or League. Beside these treaties the English have an exclusive treaty with the Sheikh of Bahrein to such a degree, that the islands are practically a British protectorate.

Although there are no formal treaties with the tribes along the Hassa coast and Katar, these being under Turkish rule, that region is not disregarded by Great Britain, nay Nejd itself finds a place in the administration reports of the Persian Gulf. Political agency whenever the horizon in that part of the peninsula shows a storm cloud though it be no bigger than a man's hand. The claims of the Porte to sovereignty over El Katar are not admitted by the British government<sup>2</sup> and are the cause not only of diplomatic controversy but of actual interference on the part of the British when necessary.

The great benefits that have followed the treaties of peace with the Arab tribes are manifest most of all by a comparison of that part of the Arabian coast under English supervision and the long stretch from Katif to Busrah which is Turkish. The former enjoys peace and the tribes have settled down to commerce and fishing, there is safety for the traveller and the stranger everywhere, the latter is in continual state of warfare, there is neither commerce nor agriculture and the entire coast is utterly unsafe because of the *laissez faire* policy of Turkey.

<sup>1</sup> 1. Ras el Kheima—Jowasim tribe.

2. Um-el-Kawain—Al-bu-Ah tribe.

3. Ajman—Al-bu-Ah tribe.

4. Sharka—Jowasim tribe.

5. Debai—Al bu-falasal tribe.

6. Abn Dhabi—Bni Yas tribe.

All of these tribes reside between Katar and Ras el Had on the Arabian coast (See Aitchison, Vol. VII, No. xxvi.)

<sup>2</sup> Cuizon's "Persia," Vol. II., p. 453.

Turning to Oman we find, in the words of Lord Curzon, that, treaty succeeding treaty, "it may be justifiably regarded as a British dependency." The recent history of Muscat has only hastened the day when "the Union Jack will be seen flying from the castles of Muscat" The Bedoun revolt and their occupation of the town resulted in saddling the unhappy Sultan with a large bill for damages sustained by British subjects. The episode of the French coaling-station cost the Sultan his annual subsidy. Thus from the side of finance he is doubly dependent on English clemency.

The second British king of Arabia resides at Aden. There he is at once Political Resident and commander of the troops. His authority extends not only to the settlement of Aden proper but includes supervision of a territory 200 miles long by forty broad with a population of 130,000 Many of the neighboring tribes are subsidized and all of them are bound by treaty to Great Britain What the Bushire Resident is for the Gulf that the Aden Resident is for the Southern littoral of the Peninsula. Moreover the Island of Socotra is also under the Resident at Aden and the Island of Perim. The ruler of Makalla in Hadramaut is under special treaty with England; although the newspaper report, that Great Britain had declared a protectorate over all Southern Arabia, has no foundation. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following tribes in the vicinity of Aden receive (or received) annual subsidies from the British Government:

<i>Tribe.</i>	<i>Estimated Population.</i>	<i>Tribe.</i>	<i>Estimated Population.</i>
Abdali . . . . .	15,000	Haushabi . . . . .	6,000
Fadhli . . . . .	25,000	Alawi . . . . .	1,500
Akabi . . . . .	800	Amir . . . . .	30,000
Subaihi . . . . .	20,000	Yaffai . . . . .	35,000

Thus the total estimated population of these tribes is 133,300 and the total amount of the annual stipend paid them in 1877, was 12,000 German crowns (Hunter's "Aden," p 155.)

In the tribes which are bound by treaty with Britain a patriarchal system of supervision seems to prevail. Good children are rewarded and bad ones are punished. Nothing escapes the eye of the political parent; one has only to read the yearly Administration reports to find many striking and sometimes amusing examples. We quote from the Residency Report of Muscat for 1893-94 verbatim: "One case of breach of the maritime peace of the Gulf occurred in which the Sultan was advised to inflict a fine of Rs 50 (about sixteen dollars) on Meh-dibin-Ali, the Sheikh of the Kamazarah tribe of Khassab, for proceeding with a party of armed men by sea to Shaam with the object of prosecuting a certain claim his wife had against the estate of her deceased father. After some months' delay the attendance of the Sheikh was enforced at Muscat and the fine was recovered" The same report tells how the government of India acknowledged the kindness shown to the shipwrecked crew of the S S Khiva in April, 1893, by the Sultan of Muscat, "by presentation to His Highness of a handsome telescope and watch" Every year all the tribal chiefs who have proved "good boys" receive some yards of bright flannel, a new rifle or a pair of army pistols. But the patriarchal system works well; and there are few Arabs who would like English power in the Gulf or near Aden to grow less; all express admiration for English *rule*, if not for English politics. In Arabia too the old promise of Noah is finding its fulfillment to-day. "God shall enlarge Japhet and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Shem never took a better guest into his tent than when he signed a treaty of perpetual peace with England on his coasts.

England has consulates and consular agents at more places in Arabia than has any other power and her consuls exercise more authority and have greater prestige. In nearly every case they were first appointed and have therefore had longer time to extend their influence. At Jiddah, Hodeidah, and on the island of Kamaran there are British consulates or vice-con

ulates, and there are reports of a consulate at Sana. At Makalla there is a British agent. Muscat, Bagdad, Busrah, Bushne and Mohammerah all have consulates, with different degrees of authority and position, all exercising power of some sort in Arabia. Bahrein, Lingah, Sharka, Bunder Abbas, and other points in the Gulf have British agents. At Jiddah, Hodeidah and Aden there are several consulates beside the English. Muscat has for some years had an American consul and in 1894 the French established a consulate there. Russia has no representative in the Gulf save at Bagdad; nor has Germany. None of the European powers, save England, have agents at any of the Arabian ports in the Gulf nor do the ships of their navies often visit this part of the world. In fact so little do the Arabs know of other consuls than English, that their words for agent, *wakil*, and for consul, *baloz*, always signify to them British officers or appointees.

## XXIII

### PRESENT POLITICS IN ARABIA

"The signs of the times show plainly enough what is going to happen. All the savage lands in the world are going to be brought under subjection to the Christian Governments of Europe. The sooner the seizure is consummated, the better for the savages"—*Mark Twain*.

WHILE Turkey continues in power the western coast of Arabia will see no change and everything will be quiet in Hejaz. If however the trouble between the Sherifs of Mecca and the Sublime Porte should reach a crisis or Moslem fanaticism at Jiddah should endanger the lives of Christians, we may expect England, and perhaps France and Holland to interfere as did England in 1858<sup>1</sup>. Regarding Yemen there is

<sup>1</sup> In a remarkable article, the *Novoe Vremya* makes known the Russian discovery of "a new British intrigue." It appears that Great Britain, not content with the virtual annexation of Egypt and the Sudan, is even, while carrying out her plans for the absorption of the Transvaal and the advancement of her interests in Persia, busily engaged in setting up a Mohammedan Power which is to rival that of the Sultan, and is ultimately to be used as a means of menacing, if not destroying, Russian authority in Central Asia. The puppet Prince selected for this purpose is the Sherif of Mecca. According to the *Novoe Vremya*, the Sherif has recently received from England a letter stating that the British government, having decided to invest a certain worthy but impecunious Mohammedan Sheikh with the Caliphate of Zeila, on the borders of Somaliland, and recognizing the Sherif as a descendant of the Prophet and great protector of Islam, considers it desirable for the Sherif on the day of the appointment of the new Caliph to issue a manifesto expressing his approval. In return for this service, Great Britain will proclaim Mecca and Medina the private property of the Sherif, will assure to him the greater part of the revenues of the new Caliphate, and will defend him by diplomatic means, or even

more probability of a great political change in the near future. Aden is a cinder-heap, but Sana has a fine, cold climate and is the capital of a rich mountain region capable of extraordinary development. There are those who desire to see England assume a protectorate over all Yemen, and if ever the Arabs should turn out the Turks, England would be almost compelled to step in and preserve peace for her allied tribes near Aden. Long since the army at Aden has felt the need of a hill-station and only the Crescent keeps the English troops penned up in an extinct crater where life at best is misery.

The southern part of Arabia is of such a character geographically and the coast so barren that it offers no attractions to the most ambitious land-grabber. Oman, like Yemen, is fertile and has in addition certain mining possibilities. Until recent years England was the only foreign power that claimed an interest in the heritage of the Sultan of Muscat. Now France is on the scene and is apparently unwilling that British power should increase in Oman or the Gulf. The alleged lease of a coaling-station to France by the Sultan of Muscat in February, 1899, was only the beginning of French opposition made manifest. Her establishment of a consulate at Muscat, her relations to the slave-trade, her attempt to subsidize a line of French steamers in the Gulf, her secret agents' recently travelling in the Gulf—all these were only ripples that show which way the current flows. So far England has had free play in Oman; now another power has appeared. The coaling-station incident was soon settled to the satisfaction of all Englishmen, and in a thoroughly English way. Under threat of bombardment the Sultan repudiated his agreement with the French and by way of force of arms, against the interference of the Sultan or any other Foreign Power. It is perhaps needless to say that the author of this intrigue is said to be Mr. Chamberlain, who is described as a man "without faith, without truth, capable of trampling under foot every commandment, whether of God or man, in order to accomplish his purpose of placing Great Britain at the head of the Powers of the world."—*Times of India*, 1899.

of punishment for his misconduct his annual stipend was stopped. Whether France will continue to seek to increase her influence in the Gulf remains to be seen. It is certain that English policy is strenuously opposed to allowing one square foot of Oman territory to pass into the hands of France or any other foreign power.

In April, 1899, it was announced that Russia had entered the Persian Gulf as a political power and acquired the harbor of Bunder Abbas in Persia as a terminus for her proposed railway. Since that time this has been officially denied both at Teheran and St Petersburg and also stoutly reasserted with new proofs by the English press and the press of India. It is undoubtedly news of a sensational character if it be true. The presence of Russia in the Persian Gulf would probably change the future history of all its litoral and help to decide the future partition of Arabia and Mesopotamia. All things seem to be moving toward a crisis in this region of the east. And if the battle for empire and for possession of the keys to the gateway of India should be fought in the Persian Gulf the possible consequences are too vast to be surmised. What England's policy would be in case there is truth in the alleged Russian aggression, is summarized in a recent article in the *Times* of India.

"It remains to consider what steps should be taken by Great Britain in view of the new development in Gulf politics. It may be taken for granted that Russia will not attempt to take possession of Bunder Abbas for a considerable time to come. She will make every effort to deny the existence of the advantage she has gained until a convenient opportunity arises for putting her plan into execution. In the meantime, Great Britain can be well content to remain quiet, and to imitate her adversary by playing a waiting game. It will possibly be suggested that by again occupying Kishm, and by seizing Ormuz, the value of Bunder Abbas to Russia could at once be neutralized to a large extent. That is doubtless true; but it is



material to point out that little is to be gained by precipitate action, that these points of vantage can be occupied with facility at any time, and that the true policy of Great Britain is to endeavor to preserve the *status quo* for as long a period as possible.

“Meanwhile, there are many methods by which British power and influence in the Gulf can be safeguarded. We understand that the Admiralty has already decided to strengthen the naval force maintained in Persian waters, and that the Admiral commanding the East Indies squadron will in future give the Gulf a larger share of his personal supervision. But this is not enough. The staff of political officers in the Gulf needs to be enlarged. . . . Then, too, more telegraph cables are needed. Muscat is now shut off from communication with the rest of the world, although the port was once linked up with Aden by cable. A line should be laid from Muscat to Jask forthwith, and another branch should connect Jask with Bunder Abbas and Lingah. More political agents should be stationed in the hinterland between Bunder Abbas and Seistan, with roving commissions, if necessary. One other matter needs urgent attention. Russia now possesses the sole right to construct railways in Persia, under an agreement which, after being in existence ten years, expires this year. Is anything being done to prevent the renewal of this objectionable concession, which is deeply opposed to British interests in the Shah’s dominions? It is in the highest degree important that Great Britain should secure a share in the concessions for roads and railways which will certainly be granted by the Persian government in the near future. Unfortunately, the gaze of the British public is so steadily concentrated upon China that it is unable to perceive dangers which threaten the empire in a far more vital place. There must soon be a rude awakening. It is not in China, but in Persia and the Persian Gulf, that the centre of political strife and international rivalry in Asia will soon be fixed.”

With the event of Russia in the Gulf and her Persian policy, with France envious of England's growing prestige in this Orient, with Germany at work building railways and Turkey's days numbered, what is to be the future of the fertile provinces of Busrah and Bagdad? Will England continue to hold the upper hand in every part of Arabia and will some future Lord Cromer develop the Euphrates-Tigris valley into a second Egypt? The battle of diplomacy is on. European cabinets, backed by immense armies and navies are playing a game involving tremendous issues—issues not only tremendous to themselves and to the populations of Arabia and Persia, but involving the interest of another King and the greatest Kingdom. The event toward which history and recent politics in Arabia have so far been moving is “the one far off Divine event” of the Son of God. Not only to the missionary but to every Christian the study of the politics of Arabia makes evident the great Providential hand of God in the history of the Peninsula during the past century. Jesus Christ holds the key to the situation. All the kings of the earth are in His hand and to whomsoever He gives power or privilege, the end will be the glory of His own name and the coming of His own kingdom; also in Arabia.

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## XXIV

### THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

"Arabic grammars should be strongly bound, because learners are so often found to dash them frantically on the ground"—*Keith Falconer*.

"It is a language more extended over the face of the earth and which has had more to do with the destiny of mankind than any other, except English"—*Rev. Geo. E. Post, M D*, Beirut.

"Wisdom hath alighted upon three things—the brain of the Franks, the hands of the Chinese and the tongue of the Arabs."—*Mohammed ed-Damiri*.

TWO religions contend for the mastery of the world ; Christianity and Islam Two races strive for the possession of the dark continent, the Anglo-Saxon and the Arab. Two languages have for ages past contested for world-wide extension on the basis of colonization and propagandism—the English and the Arabic. To-day about seventy millions of people speak some form of the Arabic language, as their vernacular, and nearly as many more know something of its literature in the Koran because they are Mohammedans. In the Philippine islands the first chapter of the Koran is repeated before dawn paints the sky red The refrain is taken up in Moslem prayers at Pekin and is repeated across the whole of China It is heard in the valleys of the Himalayas and on "the roof of the world." A few hours later the Persians pronounce these Arabic words and then across the Peninsula the muezzins call the "faithful" to prayer. At the waters of the Nile, the cry "*Allahu akbar*" is again sounded forth ever carrying the Arab speech westward across the Sudan, the Sahara and the Barbary States until it is last heard in the mosques of Morocco.

The Arabic Koran is a text-book in the day-schools of Turkey, Afghanistan, Java, Sumatra, New Guinea, and Southern Russia. Arabic is the spoken language not only of Arabia proper but forces the linguistic boundary of that peninsula 300 miles north of Bagdad to Diarbekr and Mardin, and is used all over Syria and Palestine and the whole of northern Africa. Even at Cape Colony there are daily readers of the language of Mohammed. As early as 1315 Arabic began to be taught at the universities of Europe through the missionary influence of Raymund Lull and to-day the language is more accurately known and its literature more critically investigated at Leiden than at Cairo and at Cambridge than in Damascus.

A missionary in Syria who is a master of the Arab tongue thus characterizes it, "A pure and original speech of the greatest flexibility, with an enormous vocabulary, with great grammatical possibility, fitted to convey theological and philosophical and scientific thought in a manner not to be excelled by any language except the English, and the little group of languages which have been cultivated so happily by Christianity in Central Europe." Ernest Renan, the French Semitic scholar, after expressing his surprise that such a language as Arabic should spring from the desert-regions of Arabia and reach perfection in nomadic camps, says that the Arabic surpasses all its sister Semitic languages in its rich vocabulary, delicacy of expression, and the logic of its grammatical construction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He speaks of it as follows in his *Histoire des Langues Semitiques*, p. 342. "Cette langue, auparavant inconnue, se montre à nous soudainement dans toute sa perfection, avec sa flexibilité, sa richesse infinie, tellement complète, en un mot, que depuis ce temps jusqu'à nos jours elle n'a subi aucune modification importante. Il n'y a pour elle ni enfance, ni vieillesse, une fois qu'on a signalé son apparition et ses prodigieuses conquêtes, tout est dit sur son compte. Je ne sais si l'on trouverait un autre exemple d'un idiome entant dans le monde comme celui-ci, sans état archaïque, sans degrés intermédiaires ni tâtonnements."

The Semitic family of languages is large and ancient, although not as extensive geographically nor so diverse as those of Indo-European family. Some maintain<sup>1</sup> that the Semites were ancient immigrants from the region northeast of Arabia. They hold that before the formation of the different Semitic dialects the Semites everywhere used a name for the camel (*jemel*) which still appears in all of the dialects. They have however no names in common for the date-palm, the fruit of the palm nor for the ostrich, therefore, in their first home, the Semites knew the camel but did not know the palm. Now the region where there is neither date-palm nor ostrich and yet where the camel has lived from the remotest antiquity is the central table-land of Asia near the Oxus. Von Kremer holds that from this region the Semites migrated to Babylon even before the Aryan emigration, the Mesopotamian valley is the oldest seat of Semitic culture.

Others<sup>2</sup> hold that the original home of the Semites was in the south of Arabia whence they gradually overspread the peninsula, so that, as Sprenger expresses it, "All Semite are successive layers of Arabs." The arguments for this theory are briefly given by Sayce:<sup>3</sup> "The Semitic traditions all point to Arabia as the original home of the race. It is the only part of the world which has remained exclusively Semites. The racial characteristics—intensity of faith, ferocity, exclusiveness, imagination—can best be explained by a desert origin." De Goeje lays stress on the fine climate of Central Arabia and the splendid physical development of the Arab as additional proof together with the indisputable fact that "of all Semitic languages the Arabic approaches nearest to the original mother-tongue as was conclusively demonstrated by Professor Schrader of Berlin."

The following table will show at a glance the position of

<sup>1</sup> Von Kremer, Guidi, Hommel

<sup>2</sup> Sayce, Sprenger, Schrader, De Goeje, Wright.

<sup>3</sup> Assyrian Grammar, p. 13

Arabic in the Semitic family group, *dead languages being put in italics* Arabic, ancient and modern belongs to the South Semitic group and at an early period supplanted the Hymyaritic in Yemen, although the Mahri and Ehekeli dialects are still used in the mountains of Hadramaut <sup>1</sup> It was practically the only conquering language on the list and is the only one that is growing in use.

## TABLE OF SEMITIC LANGUAGES.

NORTHERN :	{	EASTERN {	{	Eastern {	{	Syriac. Mandaean. <i>Nabathean.</i>			
		WESTERN (Aramaic) {					Western {	{	<i>Samaritan.</i> <i>Jewish Aramaic</i> (as Targums and Talmud). <i>Palmyrene.</i> <i>Egyptian Aramaic.</i>
CENTRAL .	{	{ <i>Phœnician</i> Hebrew <i>Moabite and Canaanitish dialects.</i>							
SOUTHERN :	{	ARABIC (Ishmaelite) {	{	One written language but Modern Dialects in speech	{	Maltese [?]. Morocco. Algerian, etc. Egyptian. Syrian Yemen. Bagdadi. Omanese, etc.			
							<i>Himyaritic</i> {	{	Mahn <i>Ehkeh</i>

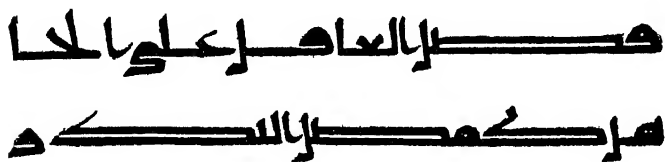
There are to-day over one hundred Arabic newspapers and magazines regularly published and which together have an immense circulation in all parts of the Arabic-speaking world.

<sup>1</sup> An account of this language or dialect was given by Surgeon H. J. Carter in *Journal Roy. Asiat. Soc.*, July, 1847.

While the Arabic language has now acknowledged supremacy above all its sisters, in its historical and literary development it was last of them all. Not until the seventh century of our era did Arabic become, in any sense, important. The language received its literary birthright and its inspiration through the illiterate prophet who could not read but who set all the Eastern world to studying his book. The Arabic literature of the days before Mohammed has a high literary character, but with all its beauty it was only the morning star that ushered in the sunrise. When once the Koran was promulgated, literature and grammar and the sciences all spoke Arabic. It was the renaissance of the dead and dying East. Whatever effect the Koran may have had on the social life and morals of a people, no one denies that it was the Koran and that alone which rescued Arabic from becoming a local idiom. Again this Koran was the unifying factor of the new religion, sweeping everything down before it; not only did it unify the hostile tribes of Arabia but melted all their dialects into one and established an ever-abiding classical standard for the remotest student of the language of revelation. We do not of course hold, as do the Arabs, that the Arabic of the Koran is absolutely without a parallel in grammatical purity and diction. The contrary has been proved by Noldeke and Dozy. The latter states that the Koran is "full of bastard-Arabic and has many grammatical blunders, which are at present unnoticed, since the grammarians have kindly constructed rules or exceptions to include even these in the list of unapproachable style and perfection."

The origin and history of the Arabic alphabet is exceedingly interesting. All writing was originally pictorial, the next stage being that of the ideogram. Perhaps a trace of this earliest writing still remains in the *wasms* or tribal marks of the Bedouin. Scholars maintain that the earliest Semitic writing we possess of certain date is that on the Moabite Stone, discovered by the missionary Klein in 1868. Almost of equal age is the

Cyprus and Sidon alphabet, and that of the Phœnicians, found on ancient coins and monuments. The date of this writing is put at 890 B. C. On these monuments and coins the system of orthography is already so carefully developed as to prove that the Semites understood the art centuries before that date. The oldest forms of these Semitic alphabets are in turn derived (Halevy, Noldeke) from the Egyptian hieratic characters. The oldest inscriptions found in North Arabia by Doughty and Enting, in the Nabatean character, and in South Arabia by Halévy and others in Himyaritic character, are both written, like modern Arabic, from right to left. Although the characters do not resemble each other, this would seem to indicate a common origin. The intimate connection of the present Arabic alphabet with the Hebrew or Phœnician, is shown not only by the forms of the letters, but by their more ancient numerical arrangement called by the Arabs *Abjad*, and which corresponds with the Hebrew order.



CUFIC CHARACTERS.

Accounts differ even among the Arabs as to who adapted or invented the present Arabic alphabet from the older Cufic forms. Some even hold that they both developed simultaneously out of the Himyaritic. The Cufic, it is true, is found on old monuments and coins from the Persian Gulf to Spain, and is a square, apparently more crude kind of writing. But the cursive script (now called *Naskh*) seems to have been in use also long before Mohammed's time, the Arab historians to the contrary notwithstanding, for the exigencies of daily life. That writing was known at Mecca before the era of Mohammed is acknowledged by Moslem tradition and the close intercourse



with Yemen long before that time would certainly indicate some knowledge of Himyaritic Syriac and Hebrew were also known in Mecca and Medina because of the Jewish population, and it is not improbable that this may have had influence on the present form of the Arabic alphabet.

يَا ابْنِي لَا تَلِيسْ بِشَرِّ عَيْتِي فَجَاءَ الْغَيْبُ

MODERN COPYBOOK STYLE OF ARABIC (VOWELED.)

الْأَمَلُ مِنْهُ ظَهَرَ أَنَّ تَنْظُرَ إِلَى أَهْلِنَا فَلَمْ نَحْمَدِ  
جِدَّ الْحَايَةِ وَأَنْ تَمْدُوهُ الْبُحْبُوحَةُ الَّتِي تَكُونُ  
مِنْ أَلْسِنَةِ الْفُضَاءِ وَالْحَاجَةُ الْمُرْسَلَةِ مِنْ أَجْلِهَا

ORDINARY ARABIC HANDWRITING (UNVOWELED.)

It is not without reason that Mohammed's cognomen for Jew and Christian alike was, "the people of the *Book*" At first, like the Hebrew, Arabic had no vowel-points or diacritical marks In the earliest Cufic Koran manuscripts these have the form of accents, horizontal lines or even triangles. The Arabs tell many interesting stories about the cause and occasion of their invention by Abu Aswad ad Duili or by Nasr bin 'Asim. In each case the awful sin of mispronouncing a word in the Koran leads to the device of vowel-points as a future preventative According to another tradition it was Hasan-el-Basī (who died A. H. 110) that first pointed the Koran text with the assistance of Yahya bin Yāmar The vowel-points, so called, were in reality the abbreviated weak-consonants and were placed, in accordance with the sound of these letters, when so pronounced The vowel-points and diacritical marks are al-

ways found in copies of the Koran, but seldom in other books and never in epistolary writing. They are considered by the Arabs themselves as at best a necessary evil, except for grammarians and purists. The story is told that an elaborate piece of Arabic penmanship was once presented to the governor of Khorasan under the Caliph al Mamun, and that he exclaimed, "How beautiful this would be if there were not so much coriander seed scattered over it!"

فِي الْإِشَاعِرِ كَانَهُ عَمَّا وَقَبِينَهُمَا هُوَ سَائِرُ  
 نَأَاتِ يَوْمِهِ بَعْضِ الطَّرِيقِ وَإِنَّا أَهْوَى بَعْضًا وَهَذَا بَعْلَمُ  
 الشَّاعِرِ أَرَى حَقًّا قَاتِلُهُ لَأَمْعَالَهُ بَعَالَهُ يَا هَسَابًا  
 أَنَا أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْغَيْبَةَ فَمَا حَصَرْتُ وَلَا كُنْتُ سَأَلْتُكَ اللَّهُ  
 إِنَّا أَنْتَ قَتَلْتَنِي أَمِيرُ الْوَلَدِ وَوَفَّ بِالْطَّابِ وَقُلْتُ

MOGREBI ARABIC OF NORTH AFRICA (UNVOWELED)

The demand for perfect accuracy in copying the Koran in every detail of point and accent, led the Arabs to glorify the art of calligraphy, and, as they followed neither painting nor sculpture because of their creed, they naturally put all their artistic taste into their manuscripts. Brilliantly colored and adorned with gold on delicately tinted parchment, or paper, the fanciful chapter-headings and the elegant tracery of each letter in the book make such an old manuscript Koran a real work of art. Three names are recorded of those who in the early days of Islam were the Raphaels and Michael Angelos of the reed-pen, Wazir Muhammed bin Ali, Ali bin Hilal al Bauwab, and Abu-'d-Dur bin Yakut al Musta'sami. As time went by there arose various schools of this art, chiefly distinguished as

the Magrib-Berber or Western, and the Turko-Arab or Eastern style. In the decorations of the Alhambra the western school shows some of its most finished art, while Damascus and Cairo mosques show the delicate "Arabesque" traceries of the lighter oriental school. It is in manuscripts, however, that the best work is found; some of these are of priceless value and exceeding beauty. Even to-day there are Arab penmen whose work commands a good price as *art* and gives them a position in society as it did the monkey, described in the Arabian Nights, who improvised poetry in five styles of caligraphy for the astonished king.

قال ابن بطوطه كنت سمعت بمدينة بلغار فاروت  
التوجه اليها لاري ما ذكر عنهما من انشاء قصر الليل  
بها وقصر النهار ايضا في عكس ذلك الفصل وكان

PERSIAN STYLE EXTENSIVELY USED IN EASTERN ARABIA.

The Arabic language is distinguished among those that know it for its *beauty*, and among those who are learning it for its *difficulty*. To the Arabs their language is not only the language of revelation, but of the Revealer himself. Allah speaks Arabic in heaven, and on the day of judgment will judge the world in this "language of the angels." All other tongues are vastly inferior in grammatical construction, and what else could they be since the Koran with its classical perfection has existed before all words, uncreated, written on the preserved tablet in heaven, the daily delight of the innumerable company of angels! As Renan says, "among a people so preoccupied with language as the Arabs, the *language* of the Koran became as it were a

second religion, a sort of dogma inseparable from Islam " But the innate beauty of the language is acknowledged by all who have made it a study, whether born on the soil of Arabia or educated in the universities of Europe. From the days of the Dutch scholars, De Dieu, Schultens, Schroeder and Scheid, and the Swiss Hottinger to the times of Noldeke, Gesenius and Renan, the praises of Arabic have been proclaimed in Europe, and its study pursued with a devotion that almost amounted to a passion.

The elements of beauty in this language are many. There is first its logical structure, which, we are told, surpasses that of any other language. Even the order of the alphabet is more logical as regards form than the Hebrew; its grammar is altogether logical; the exceptions to its rules can be formed, so to say, into a syllogism. Palmer's and Lansing's grammars show how this logical structure can be discovered in the minutest detail, so that, *e. g.*, the three short vowels control the forms not only, but the significance of roots, and are the key to the interpretation of all grammatical mysteries.

A second element of beauty is found in the lexical richness of the Arabic. Its boundless vocabulary and wealth of synonyms are universally acknowledged and admired. A dictionary is called a *Kamoos* or "Deep Ocean" where "full many a gem of purest ray serene, the dark unfathomed caves" conceal for the diligent student. Renan tells of an Arab linguist who wrote a book on the 500 names given to the lion in literature, another gives 200 words for serpent. Firozabadi, the Arabian Webster, is said to have written a sort of supplement on the words for honey and to have left it incomplete at the *eightieth* word; the same authority asserts that there are over 1,000 different terms in Arabic for sword and, judging from its use by the Arabs, this appears credible. De Hammer Purgstall, a German scholar, wrote a book on the words relating to the *camel* and finds them, in Arabic literature, to the number of 5,744. But this remarkable exhibition loses some

of its grandeur when truth compells us to state that many of the so-called synonyms are epithets changed into substantives or tropes accidentally employed by some poet to conform to his rhyme. It is also true that the wealth of synonym is limited in Arabic to a certain class of words, in other departments of thought, ethics for example, the language is woefully poor, not even having a distinctive word for conscience.

A third point of beauty in the Arabic language is its purity as compared with other Semitic languages or even all other languages. This was partly due to the geographical location of the Arabs and is still due to their early literature together with the Koran which has put a classical standard into the hands of every schoolboy and has prevented, by the law of religion, both development and deterioration. "While other languages of the same family became dead and while many of their forms and meanings changed or disappeared, the Arabic remained comparatively pure and intact excepting perhaps the temporary corruption which necessarily occurred during the Moslem conquests and foreign applications of the first four Caliphs" <sup>1</sup>

The Arabic race occupied at first a circumscribed territory and came little into contact with the surrounding nations so that the forces which produce linguistic decay were absent. The only thing that will preserve a language pure next to isolation is a classical literature. English has changed less since Shakespeare's time than it did in the interval between him and Chaucer. So too with Arabic. Had it not been for the Koran and its cognate literature, by this time the people of Syria, Egypt, Morocco and Oman would perhaps scarcely understand each other, and their written language would differ vastly, but the existence of this literature has kept the written language a unit and put a constant check on the vagaries of dialect.

The last, and chief element of beauty in the Arabic tongue

<sup>1</sup> Lansing

is undoubtedly its wonderful literature. In poetry alone, the Arabians can challenge the world, in grammar, logic and rhetoric the number of their works is legion, while both at Bagdad and Cordova Arab historians and biographers filled whole libraries with their learning, in Cordova the royal library contained 400,000 volumes. Algebra and Astronomy are specially indebted to the Arabs, all the sciences received attention and some of them addition from the Arabian mind.

The Arabic tongue is not only beautiful but it is difficult, exceedingly difficult, to every one who attempts to really master it. One of the veteran missionaries of Egypt wrote, in 1864, "I would rather traverse Africa from Alexandria to the Cape of Good Hope, than undertake a second time to master the Arabic language." The first difficulty is its correct pronunciation. Some Arabic letters cannot be transliterated into English, although certain grammars take infinite pains to accomplish the impossible. The gutturals belong to the desert and were doubtless borrowed from the camel when she complained of overloading. There are also one or two other letters which sorely try the patience of the beginner and in some cases remain obstinate to the end. Then the student soon learns, and the sooner the better, that Arabic is totally different in construction from European tongues and that "as far as the East is from the West" so far he must modify his ideas as to the correct way of expressing thought; and this means to disregard all notions of Indo-European grammar when in touch with the sons of Shem. Every word in the Arabic language is referred to a root of three letters. These roots are modified by prefixes, infixes and suffixes, according to definite models, so that from one root a host of words can be constructed and vice versa, from a compounded word all the servile letters and syllables must be eliminated to find the original root. This digging for roots and building up of roots is not a pastime at the outset because of the extent of the root-garden. Dozy's *supplement* to Lane's Monumental Arabic Lexicon has 1,714

pages. So large in fact is the vocabulary of Arabic writers that the classics require copious explanatory notes for the Arabs themselves and some of them have written notes on the notes, to explain the difficult words used in explaining others more difficult. Moreover Arabic literature is so vast in its extent that acquaintance with the vocabulary of a dozen authors in one line of literature does not yet enable the student to appreciate the language of other works. You may be able to read the Koran tolerably well and understand its diction and yet when you turn to the Arabian Shakespeare or Milton find yourself literally at sea, in the *Kamoos*, and unable to understand a single line.

The regular verb in Arabic has fifteen conjugations, two voices, two tenses, and several moods; the irregular verbs are many and mysterious to the beginner although grammarians try to make them appear easier by demonstrating that all their irregularities are strictly logical, not the result of linguistic perversity but foreseen calculation and providential wisdom. Is it not "the language of the angels"?—even the broken-plurals?

As a final testimony to the difficulties of the Arabic language listen to Ion Keith Falconer. After passing the Semitic Languages Tripos at Cambridge under Dr Wright, and taking a special course in Arabic at Leipzig, he writes from Assiut in Egypt: "I am getting on in Arabic, but it is most appallingly hard . . . I have learned a good deal and can make myself intelligible to servants and porters. I have a teacher every day for two hours and translate from a child's reading book." After *five years* of further study he writes once more from Aden (Jan. 17, 1886), "I am learning to speak Arabic quite nicely but it will be long before I can deliver real discourses." And this man was an all-around scholar with a passion for languages. Without any doubt Arabic *is* one of the most difficult languages in the world to acquire with any degree of fluency, and progress in its attainment means ceaseless plodding and endless diligence.

## THE LITERATURE OF THE ARABS

THE literature of the Arabs is either pre-Islamic or post-Islamic, the former has as its chief classics the Muallakāt or seven suspended poems, the latter finds its centre and apex as well as its origin and inspiration in the Koran. The seven ancient poems, still extant, are also called *Muthahabat* or the "golden poems," and it is generally admitted by Arabic scholars that this was indeed the golden age of Arab literature. Zuhair, Zarafah, Imru-l-Kais, Amru-ibn-Kulsum, Al Harith, 'Antar and Labid were the authors of these poems and all but the last were idolaters, and belong to what the conceit of Islam calls "the Time of Ignorance." These poems furnished the model ever afterward for later writers and, according to Baron de Slane, are remarkable for their perfection of form and exhibit a high degree of linguistic culture.

But the Koran has eclipsed all that ever went before it or came after it in the eyes of the Arabs. It is the paragon of literary perfection as well as of moral beauty. Its style is inimitable because it is Divine in the highest sense of the word. To criticise its diction is to be guilty of blasphemy and to compare it with other literature is to commit sacrilege. There is no doubt that the chief charm of the Koran from a literary standpoint is its musical jingle and cadence. It is such as the Arabs, the earliest masters of rhyme, love, and servilely imitate in all their later prose works. Our English translations of the Koran, although accurate, (and even idiomatic, as Palmer's) cannot reproduce this, in consequence the book appears vapid, monotonous and to the last degree wearisome and uninteresting. Attempts have been made by Burton and others to acquaint English readers



with this element of beauty in Mohammed's revelation. The following<sup>1</sup> is almost equal to the Arabic itself, and, to say the least, sounds more interesting than Sale's prose version of the same passage :

“ I swear by the splendor of light  
 And by the silence of night  
 That the Lord shall never forsake thee  
 Nor in His hatred take thee ;  
 Truly for thee shall be winning  
 Better than all beginning  
 Soon shall the Lord console thee, grief no longer control thee,  
 And fear no longer cajole thee.  
 Thou wert an orphan-boy, yet the Lord found room for thy head.  
 When thy feet went astray, were they not to the right path led ?  
 Did He not find thee poor, yet riches around thee spread ?  
 Then on the orphan-boy, let thy proud foot never tread,  
 And never turn away the beggar who asks for bread,  
 But of the Lord's bounty ever let praise be sung and said.”

It is not to be expected that all the transcendent excellencies and miraculous beauties which Moslem commentators find in the Koran should unveil themselves to cold, unsympathizing western gaze, but that the book has a certain literary beauty no one can deny who has read it in the original. As Penrice says in his preface to his Dictionary of the Koran, “ Beauties there are many and great ; ideas highly poetical are clothed in rich and appropriate language, which not unfrequently rises to a sublimity far beyond the reach of any translation, but it is unfortunately the case that many of those graces which present themselves to the admiration of the finished scholar are but so many stumbling-blocks in the way of the beginner ; the marvellous conciseness which adds so greatly to the force and energy of its expressions cannot fail to perplex him while the frequent use of the ellipse leaves in his mind a feeling of vagueness not altogether out of character in a work of its oracular and *soi-disant* prophetic nature.”

<sup>1</sup> Found in the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1866, article “ Mohammed.”

The greatest literary treasure of the Arabs next to the Koran is the *Makāmat* of Al Hariri. No one of polite scholarship would dare profess ignorance of this great classic, and the reader of these "Assemblies" is introduced to every branch of Mohammedan learning—poetry, history, antiquities, theology and law. Recently Hariri has been translated into English by Chenery and an earlier translation by Pierson has also been printed. Stanley Lane-Poole reviewing these translations thus characterizes this Shakespeare of the Arabic world.

"It is difficult, no doubt, for most Westerns to appreciate the beauties of this celebrated classic. There is no cohesion, no connecting idea, between the fifty separate 'Assemblies,' beyond the regular reappearance of an egregious Tartufe, called Abu-Zeyd, a Bohemian of brilliant parts and absolutely no conscience, who consistently extracts alms from assemblies of people in various cities, by preaching eloquent discourses of the highest piety and morality, and then goes off with his spoils to indulge secretly in triumphant and unhallowed revels. Even in this framework there is no attempt at originality, it is borrowed from Hamadāni, the 'Wonder of the Age.' The excellence lies in the perfect finish: the matter is nothing; the charm consists in the form alone. Yet this form is, to English readers, exotic and artificial. Among its special merits, in the eyes of Easterns, is the perpetual employment of rimed prose. To us this is apt to seem at once monotonous and strained, with its antithetic balance in sense, and jungle of sound, but to the Arabs, as to many primitive peoples, either riming or assonant prose was from early times a natural mode of impassioned and impressive speech. It is the mode adopted constantly and without strain in the Koran, and it is the mode into which an historian, such as Ibn-el-Athîr, falls naturally when he waxes eloquent over a great victory or a famous deed. . . .

"But if we do not care for rimed prose, there is plenty besides in Hariri to minister to varied tastes. In these wonderful 'Assemblies,' we shall find every kind of literary form, except

the shambling and the vulgar Pagan rhetoric, Moslem exhortation, simple verse, elaborate ode, everything that the immeasurable flexibility of the Arabic tongue and the curious art of a fastidious scholar could achieve—all is here, and we may take our choice ”

What is said by this scholarly critic of Hariri holds true of most Arabic poetry, it lacks unity of idea and sobriety of expression. All is intense. Every beautiful eye is a narcissus, tears are pearls; teeth are pearls or hail-stones, lips are rubies, the gums, pomegranate blossoms; piercing eyes are swords, and the eyelids, scabbards, a mole is an ant creeping to suck the honey from the lips, a handsome face is a full-moon, an erect form is the letter alif as penned by Wazir Muhammed, black hair is night, the waist is a willow-branch or a lance, and love is always passion. Far-fetched allusions abound and the *sense* at every turn must do homage to the *sound*. In the judgment of Baron de Slane the two notable exceptions to the rule are Al Mutanabbi and Ibn El Farid who exhibit a daring and surprising originality often approaching the sublime and, in the case of the latter, mystic reveries and spiritual beauties of no mean order.

The influence of the Arabic language on other tongues and peoples has also been great, ever since the rise of Islam. The Persian language adopted the Arabic alphabet and a large number of Arabic words and phrases; so that, as Renan remarks, in some Persian books all the words are Arabic and only the grammar remains in the vernacular. As for Hindustani, three fourths of its vocabulary consists of Arabic words or Arabic words derived through the Persian. The Turkish language also is indebted for many words taken from the Arabic and uses the Arabic alphabet. The Malay language, with the Moslem conquest, was also touched by Arabic influence and likewise adopted its alphabet. In Africa its influence was yet more strongly felt. The language extended over all the northern half of the continent and is still growing in use

to-day The geographical nomenclature of the interior is Arabic and Arabs preceded Livingstone, Stanley and Speke in all their journeys. The languages of the southern Sudan, the Hausa, and even those of Guinea borrowed largely from the Arabic. Europe itself did not escape the influence of the conquering Semitic tongue Spanish and Portuguese betray a vast number of Arabic words and idioms. French and English are also indebted to Arabic in no small degree for many scientific and technical words introduced at the time of the crusades and even earlier. Here is a partial list of those which we received directly or indirectly from the Arab tongue, as given in Skeat's Etymological Dictionary and arranged into sentences; every word in italics is of Arabic origin

"The *Nabob Mohammedan Magazine* relates, that years after the *Hegira*, a *saracen caliph* or *Mameluke sultan*, sat with his *musulman emir*, *admiral*, *vizier*, *moslem mufti* and *Koran-munshiee*, (who knew *alchemy* and *algebra* and could *cipher* the *azimuth* and *nadir* to zero), *sheikh* of the *hareem*, *muezzin* and *tariff-dragoman* of the *arsenal*, under a *carob-tree*, on *sofas* of *mohair-mattress* covered with *jerboa-* and *gazelle-skins*, drinking *coffee*, *saffron-elixer*, *arrack*, *alcohol* and *syrup* of *senna carraway* and *sumach* For tonic they also had *rose-attar*, *artichokes*, *alkaline-nitre* in *myrrh*, *taraxacum*, *otto-sherbet*, and *naphtha* in *amber cups*. The *Sultan's* infant daughter wore a *carmine cotton-and-muslin chemise* or *diaper* with a *civet talisman* and *jasper amulet*; she played a *Tartar lute* Suddenly a *giaour Bedouin assassin* with an *assagai* and *hookah-masque* came down on them from behind an *alcove* of the neighboring *arabesque mosque minaret* like a *sirocco-simoon* or *monsoon* and killed them all "

Most of these words came from the Arabic through other languages such as French and Spanish, others were directly transferred from the Arabic to English, and still others have passed the long journey from Arabic to Greek, to Latin, to

Italian, to French and thence to English. The word *magazine* is perhaps the best example of how an Arabic-root found shelter in the soil of all the European languages and grew into manifold significations from its original meaning with the Arabs, *ghazana*=to collect or store.

In modern days, especially since the opening of the Suez canal, the English language is beginning to exert its influence on Arabic. In Egypt, Syria and the Persian Gulf many English commercial terms are being adopted into the language and the newspapers spread their use everywhere.

Last, but not least, there is the immense, incalculable influence on the Arabic-tongue for all time exerted by the toil and sacrifice of the early missionaries to Syria through their college and press in giving to the world a modern Christian and scientific literature and that crowning work of Drs Eli Smith and C. V. A. Van Dyck—the Arabic Bible. The mission press at Beirut has four hundred and eighty three volumes on its catalogue and prints about twenty-five million pages annually.<sup>1</sup> The Arabic Bible “one of the noblest literally monuments of the age” will yet prove a mighty influence in purifying and ennobling the language and preserving its classical dic-

<sup>1</sup>“It would take a long list to exhaust the religious, literary and scientific contributions to the Arabic language from the missionaries in Syria. They include the translation of the Scriptures and the stereotyping of the same in numerous styles, the preparation of a Scripture guide, commentaries, a concordance, and a complete hymn and tune book; text-books in history, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, logarithms, astronomy, meteorology, botany, zoology, physics, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, hygiene, materia medica, practice of physic, surgery, and a periodical literature which has proved the stimulus to a very extensive native journalism. The Protestant converts of the mission, educated by the missionaries, have written elaborate works on history, poetry, grammar, arithmetic, natural science, and the standard dictionary of the language, and a cyclopædia which will make a library by itself, consisting of about twenty volumes of from six hundred to eight hundred pages each.”  
—Dr G. E. Post, in *New York Evangelist*.

tion to the utmost bounds of the Arab-world. There was only one Koran and there will be only one Arabic Bible—the finished product of American scholarship and her best gift to the Mohammedan world.

# النشرة الأسبوعية

اصباح الزكوة ١  
في بيروت ولبنان ومصر  
وطرابلس وداردين والشام  
، وبلاد مصر  
المرسلون الانبيكان  
في القدس وحجازها  
حنانيا في غرغور  
في يافا  
يوسف اسدي ابو نادر



قائمة الاشتراك  
٢٥ عميكا  
في بيروت ولبنان  
و٢٣ غريكا  
في سائر حواص المملكه  
الشعبانية  
ولا فريكات  
في البلاد الاحصية  
من تموز الواحد ٢٠ باره

عدد ١٦٤٩

بيروت السبت في ٤ ايلول سنة ١٨٩٧

## XXVI

### THE ARAB

"Children of Shem ! Firstborn of Noah's race  
And still forever children , at the door  
Of Eden found, unconscious of disgrace,  
And loitering on while all are gone before ;  
Too proud to dig, too careless to be poor  
Taking the gifts of God in thanklessness,  
Not rendering aught, nor supplicating more,  
Nor arguing with Him if He hide His face.  
Yours is the rain and sunshine, and the way  
Of an old wisdom, by our world forgot,  
The courage of a day which knew not death ,  
Well may we sons of Japhet, in dismay,  
Pause in our vain mad fight for life and breath,  
Beholding you —I bow and reason not "—*Anon.*

CONCERNING the origin of the tribes and people that now inhabit the Arabian peninsula there is disagreement among the learned. It is generally held that the original tribes of Northern Arabia are descendants of Ishmael. This is also the tradition of all Arab historians. As to the South Arabians, who occupied their highlands with the Hadramaut coast for centuries before the Ishmaelites appeared on the scene there are two opinions. Some believe them to be descendants of Joktan (Arabic *Kahtan*) the son of Heber and therefore, like the Northern Arabs, true Semites. Others think that the earliest inhabitants of South Arabia were Cushites or Hamitic, while some German scholars hold that in the earlier Arabs the children of Joktan and of Cush were blended into one race

Among the Ishmaelites are included not only Ishmael's direct descendants through the twelve princes,<sup>1</sup> but the Edomites, Moa-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxv. 16.

bites, Ammonites, Midianites and probably other cognate tribes. The names of the sons of Ishmael in relation to their settlements and the traces of these names in modern Arabia is a subject which has been taken up by Bible dictionaries but which still offers an interesting field for further study. The Arabs themselves have always claimed Abrahamic descent for the tribes of the north. The age-long, racial animosity between the Yemenites and Māadites seems to confirm the theory of two distinct races inhabiting the peninsula from very early times; and they remain distinct until to-day in spite of a common language and a common religion. "The animosity of these two races to each other is unaccountable but invincible. Like two chemical products which instantly explode when placed in contact, so has it always been found impossible for Yemenite and Māadite to live quietly together. At the present day the Yemenite in the vicinity of Jerusalem detests the Māadite of Hebron, and when questioned as to the reason of their eternal enmity has no other reply but that it has been so from time immemorial. In the time of the Caliphs the territory of Damascus was desolated by a murderous war for two years, because a Māadite had taken alemon from the garden of a Yemenite. The province of Murcia in Spain was deluged with blood for seven years because a Māadite inadvertently plucked a Yemenite vine-leaf. It was a passion which surmounted every tie of affection or interest. 'You have prayed for your father - why do you not pray for your mother?' a Yemenite was asked near the Kaaba. 'For my mother!' said the Yemenite, 'How could I? She was of the race of Māad' " "1

The Yemenites at a very early period founded the strong and opulent Himyarite Kingdom. The Himyarites were the navigators of the East and they were celebrated for their skill in manufacture as well as for enterprise in commerce, they had a written language, inscriptions in which were discovered all over south Arabia during the present century. The Māadite or

<sup>1</sup> In the *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1866.



Ishmaelite Arabs on the contrary were more nomad in their habits and were masters of the caravans which carried the enormous overland trade by the two great trunk-lines of antiquity, from the East to the West. One of these lines extended from Aden, (Arabia Emporium of Ptolemy) along the western part of the peninsula and through Yemen to Egypt, the other extended from Babylon to Tadmor and Damascus. A third route, nearly as important, was also in the hands of the Ishmaelite Arabs, by Wady Rumma and Nejd to the old capital of the Himyarites, Mareb<sup>1</sup> These caravans unified the Arabian peninsula and fused into one its two peoples; the northern Arabs receiving somewhat of the southern civilization and the southern Arabs adopting the language of the north. But the decline in the caravan trade brought disaster to Arabia; the ship of the desert found a competitor in the ships of the sea. Old settlements were broken up, great cities, which flourished because of overland trade, were abandoned and whole tribes were reduced from opulence to poverty. In this time of transition, long before the birth of Mohammed, the Arabic nation as it is known to modern history seems to have been formed

The modern Arabs classify themselves into Bedouins and town-dwellers; or, in their own poetic way, *ahl el beir* and *ahl el h'et*, "the people of the tent," and "the people of the wall" But this classification is hardly sufficient, although it has been generally adopted by writers on Arabia. Edson L. Clark, in his book, *The Arabs and the Turks*, gives five classes. "Beginning at the lowest round of the ladder we have first the sedentary or settled Arabs . . . who though still many of them dwelling in tents have become cultivators of the soil. By their nomadic brethren these settled Arabs are thoroughly despised as degraded and denationalized by the change in their mode of life Secondly, the wandering tribes in the neighborhood of the settled districts, and in constant intercourse with

<sup>1</sup> International Routes of Asia, by Elisee Reclus, in *New York Independent*, May 4, 1899.

their inhabitants. Both these classes, but more especially the latter, are thoroughly demoralized . . . The third class consists of the Arabs of the Turkish towns and villages, but they too are a degenerate class both in language and character . . . The fourth class consists of the inhabitants of the towns and villages of Arabia proper, who by their peculiar situation have remained more secluded from the rest of the world than even the wandering tribes. . . . Finally the great nomadic tribes of the interior, still preserving unchanged the primitive character, habits and customs of their race." This last class and this alone are the real Bedouins.

In addition to this classification according to civilization there is the universal genealogical classification; and no people in the world are fonder of genealogies than the Arabs. The names of tribes and families go back, in many cases to pre-Islamic days. The earliest tribal-names, therefore, are either taken from animals or totem-names, like Panthers, Dogs, Lizards, *e. g.*, *Anmar Kīlab*, *Dībāb*, etc., place-names transformed afterward by the genealogists into ancestors, *e. g.*, *Hadramaut*, *Hauāb*, or from idols and idol-worship, *e. g.*, *Abd el Kais*, *Abd al Lat*, etc. But the later system of genealogies as given by the Arabs are utterly unreliable because they are so evidently artificial. The backbone of the system was the pedigree of Mohammed and this is notoriously untrustworthy. "Dummy ancestors" were inserted in order to connect a particular but unimportant tribe with a distinguished one, and Hamdani himself tells us that he found it a common practice of obscure desert groups to call themselves by the name of some more famous tribe.<sup>1</sup>

Character is difficult to define. To depict the moral physiognomy of a nation and their physical traits in such a way that nothing important is omitted and no single characteristic exaggerated at the cost of others. This difficulty is increased in the case of the Arabs, by their twofold origin and their

<sup>1</sup> Smith's *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 9, 17, 131.

present twofold civilization That which is true of the town-dweller, is not always true of the Bedouin and vice versa Moreover the influence of the neighboring countries must be taken into account Eastern Arabia has taken color by long contact with Persia, this is seen in speech, architecture, food and dress Southern Arabia, especially Hadramaut, has absorbed East Indian ideas While Western Arabia, especially Hejaz, shows in many ways its proximity to Egypt Not losing sight of these distinctions, which will account for many exceptions to the general statements made, what is the character of the Arabs?

Physically, they are undoubtedly one of the strongest and noblest races of the world. Baron de Larrey, surgeon-general of the first Napoleon, in his expeditions to Egypt and Syria, says "Their physical structure is in all respects more perfect than that of Europeans; their organs of sense exquisitely acute, their size above the average of men in general, their figure robust and elegant, the color brown; their intelligence proportionate to their physical perfection, and without doubt superior, other things being equal, to that of other nations."

The typical Arab face is round-oval, but the general leanness of the features detracts from its regularity; the bones are prominent, the eyebrows long and bushy; the eye small, deep-set, fiery black or a dark, deep brown. The face expresses half dignity, half cunning, and is not unkindly, although never smiling or benignant The teeth are white, even, short and broad The Arabs have very scanty beards as a rule, but those of the towns often cultivate a patriarchal beard like the traditional beard of the prophet. The figure is well-knit, muscular, long-limbed, never fat The arms and legs are thin, almost shrunk, but with muscles like whip-cords. As young men the Bedouins are often good-looking, with bright eyes and dark hair, but the constant habit of frowning to protect the eyes from the glare of the sun, soon gives the face a fierce aspect, at forty their beards turn grey and at fifty they appear old men.

It is a common mistake to consider the Arabs democratic in their ideas of society. The genuine Arab was and is always an aristocrat. Feuds originate about the precedence of one family or tribe over another, marriage is only allowed between tribes or clans of equal standing, the whole system of sheikh-government is an aristocratic idea; and as final proof there still exists a species of caste in South Arabia, while in North Arabia the Ma'adan Arabs of Mesopotamia and the *Suleyb* of the desert are little better than Pariahs as regards their neighbors. It is with a heavy heart that any Arab sees set over him a man of less noble extraction than himself. The religion of Arabia has made its people fanatics, although according to Noldeke, "fanaticism is characteristic of all Semitic religions." But he forgets the real distinction between intolerance of another religion on ethical grounds as in the case of Judaism, and the infinitely hard, one-sided, crude exclusiveness of Islam.

The Arabs rarely have the power of taking in complex unities at a glance; the talent for arrangement is absent. An Arab carpenter cannot draw a right angle, nor can an Arab servant lay a tablecloth square on the table. The old Arab temple called a cube (Kaaba) has *none* of its sides or angles equal, their houses show the same lack of the "carpenter's eye" to-day. Streets are seldom parallel, even the street, so-called, was not *straight* in Damascus. The Arab mind loves units, not unity, they are good soldiers, but poor generals; there is no partnership in business; and no public spirit, each man lives for himself. That is the reason why Yemen cannot shake off the yoke of the Turk, and this explains why the smallest towns in Arabia have a great many little mosques. The Arab has a keen eye for particulars, great subjectivity, nervous restlessness, deep passion and inward feeling, and yet joined with strong conservatism and love of the past. In everything he follows old models and traditions; witness their poetry and their tent-life—in Arab phrase, termed their "houses of hair" and their "houses of poetry." As a result of their language-structure,

the Arabs have naturally a strong tendency to a pointed, sharp speech of epigrammatic brevity, but also go to the other extreme of ornate tautology. The former is characteristic of the desert, the latter of the towns. Eloquence and poetry are still worshipped. The only fine art which Arabs admire is that of calligraphy; and those who have seen finished specimens of an Arab master-penman, must acknowledge that in them are all the elements of painting and sculpture.

The Arabs are polite, good-natured, lively, manly, patient, courageous and hospitable to a fault. They are also contentious, untruthful, sensuous, distrustful, covetous, proud and superstitious. One must always keep in mind this paradox in dealing with an Arab. As Clark expresses it, "an Arab will lie and cheat, and swear any number of false oaths, in a pecuniary transaction; but when once his faith is pledged he can be implicitly trusted, even to the last extremity." There are Arab oaths such as *wallah*, which are intended to confirm falsehoods and signify nothing. There are others, such as the threefold oath, with *wa*, *bi* and *ti* as particles of swearing, which not even the vilest robber among them dare break. Grammatically, the two oaths are nearly the same.

Robbery is a fine art among the nomads; but the high-minded Arab robs lawfully, honestly and honorably. He will not attack his victims in the night, he tries to avoid all bloodshed by coming with overwhelming force; and if his enterprise miscarries, he boldly enters the first tent possible, proclaims his true character and asks protection. The *Dakheil*, or privilege of sanctuary, the salt covenant, the blood covenant and the sacredness of the guest, all prove that the Arabs are trustworthy. And yet, in the ordinary affairs of life, lying and deception are the rule and seldom the exception. The true Arab is niggardly when he buys, and will haggle for hours to reduce a price, and yet he is prodigal and lavish in giving away his goods to prove his hospitality.

According to Burckhardt, the Arab is the only real lover of

the Orient ; if he limits this to the Bedoun-Arab he is correct In matters of love and marriage the Arab of the towns is what Mohammed, the Meccan merchant was, after the death of the old lady Khadijah. But Arabic poetry of the times of ignorance does occasionally breathe the true tale of love and chivalry, and the desert Arabs as a rule are not polygamists nor given to divorce

It was a law among the ancient Arabs that whoever sheds the blood of a man owes blood on that account to the family of the slain. This law of blood-revenge was confirmed by the Koran and is a sacred right everywhere in Arabia. An Arab is considered degenerate who accepts a fine or any consideration save blood for blood. This law is both the cause of continual feuds, and tends to terminate them without much bloodshed. Arabs of the town and of the desert will quarrel for hours without coming to blows, it is not cowardice that prevents an open encounter, but the fear of shedding blood and blood-revenge

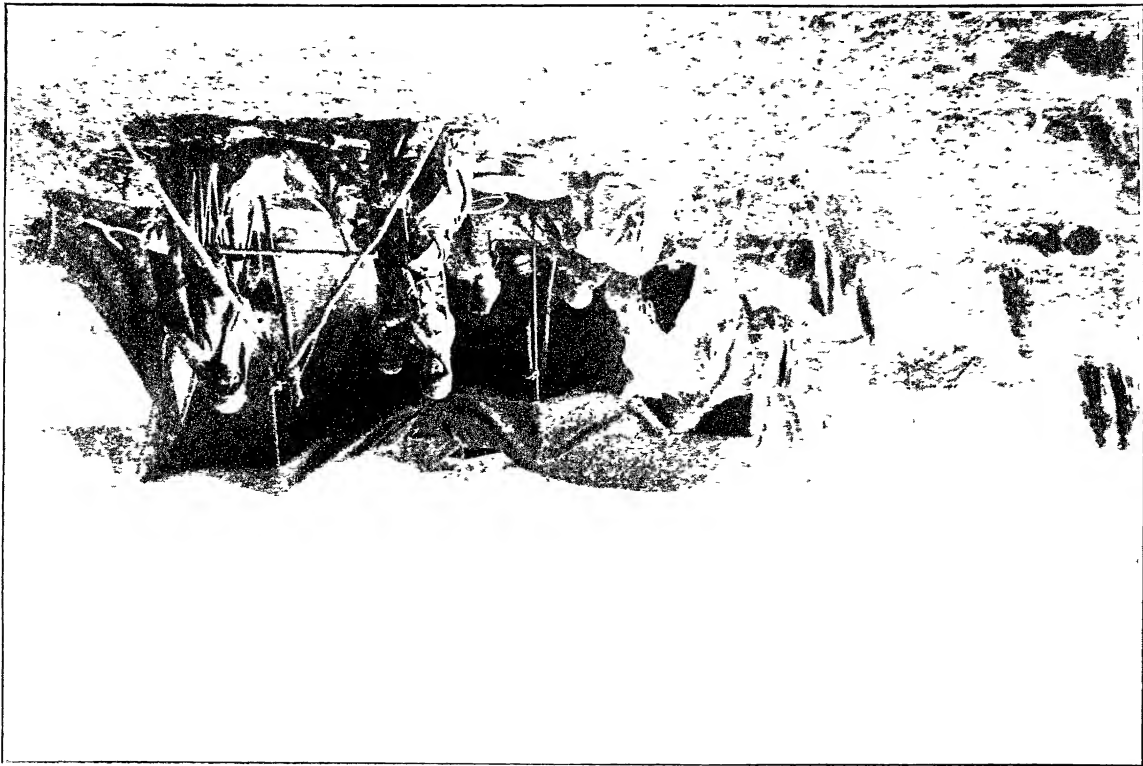
Family life among the Arabs is best studied by looking at child-life in the desert and at the position of women among the Bedoun and the town-dwellers. In no part of the world does the newborn child meet less preparation for its reception than among the Bedoun. A land bare of many blessings, general poverty and the law of the survival of the fittest, has made the Arab mother stern of heart. In the open desert under the shade of an acacia bush or behind a camel, the Arab baby first sees the daylight. As soon as it is born the mother herself rubs and cleans the child with sand, places it in her handkerchief and carries it home. She suckles the child for a short period, and at the age of four months it already drinks profusely of camels' milk. A name is given to the infant immediately ; generally from some trifling incident connected with its birth, or from some object which attracts the mother's fancy. Moslem names such as Hassan Ali or Fatimah, are extremely uncommon among the true Bedouins ; although Mohammed is

sometimes given. Beside his own peculiar name every Bedouin boy is called by the name of his father and tribe. And what is more remarkable, boys are often called after their sisters, *e g*, *Akhoo Noorah*, the brother of Noorah. Girls' names are taken from the constellations, birds, or desert animals like *Gazelle*.

In education the Arab is a true child of nature. His parents leave him to his own sweet will; they seldom chastise and seldom praise. Trained from birth in the hard school of nomad life, fatigue and danger do contribute much to his education. Buickhardt says, "I have seen parties of naked boys playing at noonday upon the burning sand in the middle of summer, running until they had fatigued themselves, and when they returned to their fathers' tents they were scolded for not continuing the exercise. Instead of teaching the boy civil manners, the father desires him to beat and pelt the strangers who come to the tent; to steal or secrete some trifling article belonging to them. The more saucy and impudent children are the more they are praised since this is taken as an indication of future enterprise and warlike disposition. Bedouin children, male and female, go unclad and play together until their sixth year. The first child's festival is that of circumcision. At the age of seven years the day is fixed, sheep are killed and a large dish of food is cooked. Women accompany the operation with a loud song and afterward there is dancing and horseback riding and encounters with lances. The girls adorn themselves with cheap jewelry and tent-poles are decorated with ostrich feathers. Altogether it is a gala-day.

The Bedouin children have few toys but they manage to amuse themselves with many games. I have seen a group of happy children, each with a pet locust on a bit of string, watching whose steed should win the race. The boys make music out of desert-grass winding it in curious fashion to resemble a horn, and calling it *Masoor*. In Yemen and Nejd a sling, like David's, with pebbles from the brook is a lad's first

CHURNING BUTTER IN A BEDOUIN CAMP







weapon. Afterward he acquires a lance and perhaps an old discarded bowie-knife. The children of the desert have no books <sup>1</sup> But, of paper, they have the Book of Nature. This magnificent picture book is never more diligently studied than by those little dark eyes which watch the sheep at pasture or count the stars in the blue abyss from their perch on a lofty camel's saddle in the midnight journeyings.

When the Bedouin lad grows up, and begins to swear by the few straggling hairs on his chin, he cannot read a letter, but he knows men and he knows the desert. The talk heard at night around the Sheikh's tent or the acacia-brush fireside is much like the wisdom of the book of Job. A philosophy of submission to the world as it is, a deification of stoicism or patience; a profound trust that all will end well at last. Sad to say even the little nomads, with their ignorance of all religion, share in the fanatical antagonism of their elders toward the Christian religion and Christians. One of their games, in Nejd, is to draw a cross on the desert sand and then defile it, they learn that all outside the pale of Mohammed's creed are *kafirs* and to please Allah are glad to throw stones at any way-faring Nasrani. Little do the Bedouins and still less do their children, however, know of the religion of Islam. The Koran is not a book for children's minds and of such is not the kingdom of Mohammed.

The Bedouin child early puts away childish things. To western eyes the children of Arabia appear like little old men and women, and the grown-up people have minds like children. This is another paradox of the Arab-character. At ten years the boy is sent to drive camels and the girl to herd sheep, at fifteen they are both on the way to matrimony. He wears the garb of a man and boasts a matchlock; she takes to spinning camel hair and sings the songs of the past. Their brief childhood is over. In the towns marriage takes place

<sup>1</sup> What the boys and girls of the towns can study we have described in our chapter on Mecca.

even earlier ; and there are boys of eighteen who have already divorced two wives

Among the Bedouins polygamy is not common nor is it among the poorer Arabs of the towns. The marriage ceremony among the Bedouins is as simple as it is long and complex among the townsmen. After the negotiations which precede the marriage contract, the bridegroom comes with a lamb in his arms to the tent of the girl's father and there cuts the lamb's throat before witnesses. As soon as the blood falls on the ground the contract is sealed, feasting and dancing follow, and at night the bride is conducted to the bridegroom's tent where he is awaiting her arrival. Dowries are paid more generally and more largely in the towns than in the desert. Among certain Arab tribes a demand of money for the hand of a bride would be deemed scandalous. From a western standpoint the women of the Bedouin stand on a higher platform of liberty and justice than those of the towns where the Koran has done its work on one half of society to repress intellect and degrade affection, and sensualize the sexual relation to the last degree. On the other hand divorce is perhaps more common among the Bedouins,<sup>1</sup> than among the city Arabs. Burckhardt met Arabs not yet forty-five years of age who were known to have had above fifty wives. Concerning the marriage-contract in the towns, the ceremony, the divorce proceedings, and the methods by which that is made legal which even the lax law of Islam condemns, the less said the better.

On the position of women in Arabia we quote four unimpeachable witnesses who have nothing in common save their knowledge of the subject ; there is truth on both sides where they differ ; where they agree there is no question of certainty as to the fact.

DOUGHTY, the Christian explorer, whose volumes are a mine of information says :<sup>2</sup> "The female is of all animals the better,

<sup>1</sup> This is the testimony of Burckhardt and Doughty

<sup>2</sup> *Arabia Deserta*, Vol. I., p. 238.

say the Arabians, save only in mankind Upon the human female the Semites cast all their blame Hers is, they think, a maleficent nature, and the Arabs complain that 'she has seven lives' The Arabs are contrary to womankind, upon whom they would have God's curse, some, they say, are poisoners of husbands and there are many adulteresses. . . . The *horma* [*i. e.*, woman] they would have under subjection, admitted to an equality, the ineptitude of her evil nature will break forth. They check her all day at home and let her never be enfranchised from servitude. The veil and the jealous lattice are rather of the obscene Mohammedan austerity in the towns; among the mild tent-dwellers in the open wilderness the housewives have a liberty as where all are kindred, yet their hareem are now seen in the most Arabian tribes half-veiled."

BURCKHARDT, the time-honored authority on things Arabian, writes: "The Bedouins are jealous of their women, but do not prevent them from laughing and talking with strangers It seldom happens that a Bedouin strikes his wife, if he does so she calls loudly on her *wasy* or protector who pacifies the husband and makes him listen to reason. . . . The wife and daughters perform all the domestic business. They grind the wheat in the handmill or pound it in the mortar; they prepare the breakfast and dinner, knead and bake the bread, make butter, fetch water, work at the loom, mend the tent-covering and are, it must be owned, indefatigable While the husband or brother sits before the tent smoking his pipe."

LADY ANN BLUNT, who travelled among the tribes of the Euphrates valley with her husband, speaks thus from a woman's standpoint. "Of the Bedouin women a shorter description will be enough. As girls they are pretty in a wild picturesque way and almost always have cheerful, good-natured faces They are hard-working and hard-worked, doing all the labor of the camp . . . They live apart from the men but are in no way shut up or put under restraint. In the

morning they all go out to gather wood for the day, and whenever we have met them so employed they have seemed in the highest possible spirits. . . . In mental qualities the women of the desert are far below the men, their range of ideas being extremely limited. Some few of them, however, get real influence over their husbands and even, through them, over their tribes. In more than one Sheikh's tent it is in the woman's half of it that the politics of the tribe are settled."

SNOUCK HURGRONJE, the Dutch traveller who spent an entire year (1884-85) in Mecca thus characterizes the position of women in Arabian towns.<sup>1</sup>

"What avail to the young maiden the songs of eulogy which once in her life resound for her from the mouth of the singing-woman, but which introduce her into a companionship by which she, with her whole sex, is despised? Moslem literature, it is true, exhibits isolated glimpses of a worthier estimation of woman, but the later view, which comes more and more into prevalence, is the only one which finds its expression in the sacred traditions, which represent hell as full of women, and refuse to acknowledge in the woman, apart from rare exceptions, either reason or religion, in poems, which refer all the evil in the world to the woman as its root; in proverbs, which represent a careful education of girls as mere wastefulness. Ultimately, therefore, there is only conceded to the woman the fascinating charm with which Allah has endowed her, in order to afford the man, now and then in his earthly existence, the prelibation of the pleasures of Paradise, and to bear him children."

The poems which revile womankind, and of which the Dutch traveller speaks, are legion. Here are two examples in English translation from Burton.

<sup>1</sup> Translation from *Mekka*, Vol. II, p. 187.

“They said, mairry<sup>1</sup>—I replied,—  
 Far be it from me  
 To take to my bosom a sackful of snakes.  
 I am free why then become a slave?  
 May Allah never bless womankind.”

“They declare woman to be heaven to man,  
 I say, Allah, give me Jehannum, not this heaven.”

Three kinds of dwellings are found in Arabia. There is the *tent*, the date-palm hut, and the house built with mortar of stone or mud-brick. The tent is distinctive, in a general sense, of the interior and of Northern Arabia; the palm-hut of the coast and of South Arabia, while houses of brick and mortar exist in all the towns and cities. The evolution of the house is from goats'-hair to matting, and from matting to mud-roof. Each of these dwellings is called *beit*, “the place where one spends the night”

The Bedoun tent<sup>1</sup> consists of nine poles, arranged in sets of three and a wide, black goats'-hair covering so as to form two parts, the men's apartment being to the left of the entrance and the women's to the right, separated by a white woollen carpet hanging from the ridge-pole. The posts are about five to seven feet in height, the length of the tent is between twenty and thirty feet, its depth at the most is ten feet. The only furniture consists of cooking utensils, pack-saddles, carpets, water-skins, wheat-bags and millstones

The date-palm hut is of different shapes. In Hejaz and Yemen it is built like a huge beehive, circular and with a pointed roof. In Eastern Arabia it consists of a square enclosure with hip-roof generally steep and covered with matting or thatch-work. At Bahrein the Arabs are very skillful in so weaving the date-fronds together and tightening every crevice that the huts keep out wind and rain-storms most successfully. The average size date-hut can be built for twenty or thirty Rupees (seven to ten dollars) and will last for several years.

<sup>1</sup> See Burckhardt's book for further particulars.

The stone-dwellings of Arabia are as different in architecture and material as circumstance and taste can make them. In Yemen large castle-like dwellings crown every mountain and frown on every valley; stone is plentiful and the plan of architecture inherits grace and strength from the older civilization of the Himyarites. In Bagdad, Busrah and East Arabia Persian architecture prevails, with arches, wind-towers, tracery and the veranda-windows. While the architecture of Mecca and Medina takes on its own peculiar type from the needs of the pilgrimage. Generally speaking the Arabs build their houses without windows to the street, and with an open court, the harem-system dictates to the builder, even putting a high parapet on the flat-roof against jealous eyes. Bleak walls without ornament or pictures are also demanded by their surly religion. All furniture is simple and commonplace, except where the touch of western civilization has awakened a taste for mirrors, marble-top tables and music-boxes.

In dress there is also much variety in Arabia. Turkish influence is seen in the Ottoman provinces and Indian-Persian in Oman, Hassa and Bahrein. The Turkish *fez* and the *turban* (which are not Arabian) are examples. The common dress of the Bedouin is the type that underlies all varieties. It consists of a coarse cotton shirt over which is worn the *abba* or wide square mantle. The headdress is made with a square cloth, folded across and fastened on the crown of the head by a circlet of woollen-rope called an '*akal*'. The color of the garment and its ornamentation depends on the locality, likewise the belt and the weapons of the wearer. Sandals of all shapes are used, shoes and boots on the coast indicate foreign influence. The dress of the Bedouin woman is a wide cotton gown, with open sides, generally of a dark blue color, and a cloth for the head. The veil is of various shapes; in Oman it has the typical Egyptian nose-piece with only the middle part of the face concealed; in the Turkish provinces of East Arabia, thin black cloth conceals all the features. Nose and earrings are

common. All Arab women also tattoo their hands and faces as well as other parts of their bodies, dye with henna and use antimony on their eyelashes for ornament

The staple foods of Arabia are bread, rice, ghee (or clarified butter, which the Arabs call *semu*) milk, mutton and dates. These are found everywhere and coffee is the universal beverage. Other foods and fruits we have considered in our study of the provinces. Tea is now widely used but was known scarcely anywhere less than twenty years ago. Tobacco is smoked in every village and the Bedouins also are passionately fond of the weed; even the Wahabi religious prohibition did not drive out desire for the universal narcotic. There is one article of food we have left unmentioned, *locusts*. These are quite a staple in the grocers' shops of all the interior towns of Arabia. They are prepared for eating by boiling in salt and water, after which they are dried in the sun. They taste like stale shrimps or dried herring. The coast-dwellers still live largely on fish and in the days of Ptolemy they were called *Ichthiophagoi*.



## XXVII

### ARABIAN ARTS AND SCIENCES

**E**VEN Islam could not suppress the Arab's love for music nor diminish his regard for the great poets of "the days of ignorance." For be it known that, although one can buy Austrian mouth-organs in the bazaar at Jiddah, and harmonicas from Germany in the toy-shop at Hofhoof, music is generally held by Moslems, even to-day, to be contrary to the teaching of the prophet. Mafia relates that when he was walking with Ibn Omar, and they heard the music of a pipe the latter put his fingers into his ears and went another road. Asked why, he said: "I was with the prophet, and when he heard the noise of a musical pipe, he put his fingers into his ears, and this happened when I was a child." Thus it comes to pass that by the non law of tradition, more binding to the pious Moslem oftentimes than the Koran itself, the Mohammedan world considers music at least among the doubtful amusements for true believers. And yet both before and after the advent of the morose legislator, Arabia has had its music and song. But music in Mohammedan lands is ever in spite of their religion, and is never, as is the case with Christianity, fostered by it.

Among the ancient Arabs poetry and song were closely related. The poet recited or chanted his own compositions in the evening mejlis, or more frequently at the public fairs and festivals, especially the national one held annually at Okatz. Here it was that the seven noble fragments still extant of their earliest literature were first read and applauded, and accounted worthy (if this part of the story be not fabulous) to be suspended, written in gold, in the Kaaba.

It is unfortunate that the Arabs, with all their wealth of lan-

guage and literature, have no musical notation, so that we can only surmise what their ancient tunes may have been. Were the early war songs of Omar and Khalid sung in the same key as this modern war chant of the Gomussa tribe, as interpreted by Lady Ann Blunt?



And did Sinbad the sailor sing the same tune on his voyages down the Persian Gulf to India which now the Lingah boatmen lustily chant as they land the cargo from a British India steamer? Or was it like this sailors' song on the Red Sea?



To both of these questions the only answer is the unchangeableness of the Orient, and this puts the probability, at least, so far that the sailors of to-day could easily join in Sinbad's chorus

The people of Jauf, in Northern Arabia, are most famous for music at the present day, according to Burckhardt. They are especially adept at playing the *Rebaba*. This may well be considered the national instrument of music. It is all but universal in every part of the peninsula, and as well-known to all Arabs as the bag pipe is to the Scotch. I have heard the highland shepherd boys of Yemen play on a set of reed-pipes rudely fastened together with bits of leather thong. The drum *tabl*, is common among the town Arabs, and is used at their marriage and circumcision feasts, but all over the desert one only hears the rebaba. It is simplicity itself in its construction, when made by the Bedouins, the finer ornamental ones are from the cities. A box frame is made ready, a stick is

thrust through, and in this they pierce an eye-hole for a single peg; a kidskin is then stretched upon the hollow box, the string is plucked from a mare's tail, and setting under it a bent twig for the bridge, their music is ready

Time and measure are often very peculiar and hard to catch, but they are kept most accurately, and Ali Bey gives an example which he says, "exhibits the singularity of a bar divided into five equal portions, a thing which J J Rousseau conceived to be practicable, but was never able to accomplish." Here it is as he gives it; it strikingly resembles the boatmen's song at Bahrein.



The singing one commonly hears, however, is much more monotonous than this, and the tune nearly always depends on the whim of the performer or singer, sometimes, alas, on his inability to give more than a certain number of variations!

Antar, one of their own poets, has said that the song of the Arabs is like the hum of flies. A not inapt comparison to those who have seen the "fly bazaar" in Hodeidah or Menamah during the date season, and heard their myriad-mouthed buzzing. Antar, however, lived in the "times of ignorance," and most probably referred to the chanting of the camel drivers, which is bad enough. Imagine the following sung in a high monotonous key with endless repetition.

"Ya Rub sallimhum min el tahdeed  
Wa ija'ad kawaihum 'amd hadeed."

That is to say, being freely interpreted:

"Oh Lord, keep them from all dangers that pass  
And make their long legs pillars of brass."

To a stranger that which seems most peculiar in Arab song is their long drawn-out tones at the close of a bar or refrain, sometimes equivalent to three whole notes or any number of beats. Doughty did not appreciate it, apparently, for he writes "Some, to make the stranger cheer, chanted to the hoarse choid of the Arab viol, making to themselves music like David, and drawing out the voice in the nose to a demensurate length, which must move our yawning or laughter." There are, however, singers and singers. I remember a ruddy Yemen lad who sang us *kasidahs* during a heavy rain-storm in an old Arab café near Ibb. The singer was master of his well-worn rebaba, and its music seemed to overmaster him. Now his hand touched the strings gently, and then again swept over them with a strong nervous motion, awakening music indeed. His voice, too, was clear and sweet, although I was not enough versed in Arabic poetry to catch the full meaning of his words. It may have been the surroundings or the jovial companionship of friendly Arabs after my Taiz seclusion and a weary journey up the mountain passes, but I have never heard sweeter music in Arabia, and have often heard worse elsewhere. God bless that travelling troubadour of Yemen!

Here is a Mecca song for female voices, as given by Ali Bey in his travels (1815), and a second sung by the women of Hejaz in a more monotonous strain:



Such songs are called *asamer*; love-songs are called *hodyeny*, and the war song is known as *hadou*. Arabic prosody and the science of metres is exceedingly extensive and seemingly difficult. What we call rhyme is scarcely known, and yet every verse ends with the same syllable in a stanza of poetry.

In Mecca as well as in other "religious," centres there is a sort of sacred-music of which Hurgronje gives several specimens. They are chants in honor of the prophet or prayers for him which are sung at the *Moleeds* or festivals in memory of Mohammed. Here are two of them

{ Sal la 'llah a la Mu - hammad  
 { Pray for mo - ham med, O God,

Sal - la 'llah 'a - lah - wa - sal - lam  
 Pray, O God, for him and peace

Mar - ha - ba - ya, nu - el ain - ni mar - ha - ba  
 mar - ha - ba jid el Hu - sain - i mar - ha - ba  
 mar - ha - ba ya mar - ha - ba - ya, mar - ha - ba - a-a-a.

Most generally, however, music is looked upon as decidedly secular, especially all instrumental music. The desert Arabs know no religious song and only sing of love and war in their old wild way. It is only at a distance from the mosque and away with the caravan, that Ghanim clears his throat and sings in a voice that can be heard for a mile as we leave him behind.



The Arabs of the desert have a reading-book all their own called *Athar*, and a writing all their own called *wasm*. No Bedouin so ignorant but he can read *Athar* and none so dull but he can write his *wasm*.